

## CHAPTER 12. BUTTONS AND FASTENERS

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This chapter discusses the evidence for clothing supplied by the buttons, cuff links, and aglets associated with the deceased. It begins with an overview of the burials from which these items were recovered. It then focuses on what black New Yorkers wore during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and how clothing and buttons were acquired. The assemblage is then described. Information is provided about recovery, condition and treatment, chain of custody, and findings about manufacture, origin, and age. A synopsis of the material and stylistic range of the assemblage is provided in the typology. The inventory is organized by individual burial, a format that best conveys how the fasteners were used.

### ***12.A. Burials with buttons, cuff links, and aglets***

The preservation environment at the African Burial Ground favored durable items, and cloth and clothing did not survive except in tiny fragments that adhered to metal objects. Only a handful of textile fragments were recovered (see 12.C). More conspicuous were the fasteners clothing left behind. These included buttons, cuff links, and aglets, tiny tubes that encased the ends of lacings and cords typically used on caps, shirts, and gowns. One possible grommet was also recovered.

Clothing fasteners made from metal, bone, and wood were found in direct association with thirty-three individuals, about 8.8% of the burials in the archaeologically excavated portion of the cemetery.<sup>1</sup> Another nine individuals had tenuous connections with clothing fasteners. The characteristics of the burials are summarized in Table 12.1. Cases with problematic proveniences are marked with an asterisk.

The burials listed in Table 12.1 do not provide an even-handed guide to 18<sup>th</sup> century street clothes—three quarters of the entries pertain to men. Nor does the table provide an even-handed guide to the clothes people were interred in. Drawstrings, tapes, and ties fastened 18<sup>th</sup> century street clothes in black New York, but shirts, trousers, and gowns with fabric fasteners are not represented in the archaeological record at the African Burial Ground. Straight pins also fastened street clothing, particularly women's wear. Women, as noted in Chapter 11, had a higher frequency than men of pins in the torso area of the body, a difference that may hint of bodices beneath, or in lieu of winding sheets and shrouds. In addition, some of the buttons and cuff links were recovered from contexts that point to non-clothing use.

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<sup>1</sup> The total used here of 376 burials includes those for which, at a minimum, the presence/absence of a coffin and *in situ* skeletal remains could be clearly determined; the most highly disturbed burials are not counted.

**Table 12.1.**  
**Burials with buttons, cuff links, and aglets**

Burial	Age (years)	Sex	Group	Items	Location in grave
6	25 - 30	male? <sup>2</sup>	late	8 buttons (5 whole copper alloy, 2 with anchor motif; portions of 3 pewter)	4 copper alloy along torso, 1 at sacrum; pewter at sacrum
10	40 - 45	male	lmid	13 copper-alloy buttons (8 whole, 5 shanks only)	7 on torso, 1 on right foot; shanks at lower right leg
22	2.5 - 4.5		mid	Aglet	Not recorded
*32	50 - 60	male	mid	1 pewter button fragment	Unknown; button not recorded in field records
37	45 - 55	male	late	1 bone button	At left wrist
158	20 - 30	male	late	2 pairs gilt copper-alloy cuff links, circular shape <sup>3</sup>	At wrists
171	44 - 60	male	late	2 bone buttons; 1 copper-alloy button ring	Bone buttons at right scapula and right femur; button ring at sternum
174	17 - 18	male	late	2 pewter buttons	lumbar vertebrae and right innominate
181	20 - 23	male	late	7 buttons (3 copper-alloy; 4 copper-alloy-and-bone w/ impressed design); cuff links (missing from lab)	6 on pelvic area, 1 found during skeletal cleaning; location of cuff links unknown.
191	25 - 30	male	late	1 copper-alloy button	Left ilium
194	30 - 40	male	late	1 copper-alloy button shank	Near right femur
203	12 - 18	undetermined	late	8 wood-and-copper-alloy buttons; possible leather covers	At the knees, wrists, and pelvic area
211	adult	male?	late	1 enamel cuff link face	On the right clavicle, adjacent to the chin
213	45 - 55	female	mid	aglet	Left parietal
214	45 - 55	male	late	1 copper-alloy button; fragments from 3 shanks and 1 wood button	Copper-alloy button near right shoulder; 2 shanks in pelvic area; shank and wood button in soil near head
238	40 - 50	male	lmid	1 bone button, 2 pair octagonal-shaped copper-alloy cuff links	Button at cervical vertebrae; cuff links at each wrist
*243	40 - 50	male	late	1 copper-alloy button	Beneath the skull, in re-deposited soil (no coffin)
250	adult	undetermined	early	1 copper-alloy button	Possibly near pelvis
257	30 - 40	male	late	3 bone buttons	1 button from left acetabulum; 2 found during screening of soil

<sup>2</sup> A “?” indicates that the assignment is probable.

<sup>3</sup> A “pair” of cuff links—two faces (or crowns) linked together—fasten a sleeve. One “cuff link” (a single face) is insufficient. A properly fastened shirt would have sported a “set” of cuff links—two matched pairs, one pair per sleeve.

**Table 12.1.**  
**Burials with buttons, cuff links, and aglets**

Burial	Age (years)	Sex	Group	Items	Location in grave
259	17 - 19	female?	late	18 buttons (11 copper alloy, 2 wood, and 5 shanks)	4 at each knee, 3 in pelvic area; 2 at ribs; 5 shanks on vertebrae and pelvis
*271	45 - 57	male	mid	2 copper-alloy domed buttons	Found on the screen
*276	20 - 24	female	late	1 copper-alloy button	Above right rib area in soil that was likely re-deposited (no coffin)
*278	45 - 55	male	late	1 copper-alloy button	Unclear, probably from soil matrix in fill (no coffin)
313	45 - 55	male	late	3 bone buttons; possible copper-alloy button ring	Coffin floor beneath top of the head; possible button ring from among left ribs
325	25 - 35	male	late	1 gilt copper-alloy button	Left upper sacrum
326	45 - 55	male	mid	4 copper-alloy domed buttons	In pelvic area and between tops of the femurs, near the hands
333	45 - 55	male	lmid	6 bone buttons	Pelvis
341	adult	male	mid	1 pair octagonal-shaped copper-alloy cuff links	Left radius
342	25 - 35	female?	late	aglet	Not recorded
353	24 - 34	male	mid	1 bone button	Next to left sciatic notch
361	33 - 57	male	early	1 pewter button (missing from laboratory)	Above right scapula/humerus
366	34 - 62	undetermined	mid	1 copper-alloy button	At right wrist
368	10.5 - 13.5		mid	1 possible grommet, copper alloy	At throat.
*371	25 - 35	female	mid	1 metal button; 2 turquoise enamel cuff link faces	Button appears to be intrusive to the burial; cuff link faces beneath left humerus
379	30 - 40	male	mid	1 copper-alloy domed button, 1 possible leather button	Pelvic area (innominate and left ulna)
385	40 - 60	female	mid	2 bone buttons	Right rib area
*387	34 - 44	male	early	Cuff link or button fragment	Provenience unknown
392	42.5 - 52.5	male	lmid	11 bone-backed buttons; 2 octagonal cuff link faces	4 at right knee, 3 at left knee, 3 adjacent to right hand, 1 adjacent to left hand; 1 cuff link at right clavicle, 1 at cervical vertebrae
*398	25 - 35	undetermined	mid	1 octagonal cuff link face	In disturbed deposit; association with burial unclear
*403	39 - 65	male	mid	2 copper-alloy buttons (1 domed, 1 flat); 2 pewter buttons	In disturbed deposit; association with burial unclear
405	6 - 10		mid	1 white metal button	Below right wrist on pelvis
415	35 - 55	male	mid	13 copper-alloy domed buttons (14 recorded in field)	4 at each knee, 2 at each upper femur, 2 at sacrum

Aglets were the least visible of the clothing fasteners recovered from the individuals interred in the burial ground. Small in size and few in number, aglets were also the least informative about burial attire. Only three aglets were recovered, one from a young child (Burial 22, a Middle Group interment) and two others from adult women (Burials 213 and 342, Middle and Late Group interments). The aglets from Burials 22 and 342 were not provenienced in the field. The aglet from Burial 213 was located on the left parietal (the cranium) and a few strands of hair had adhered to it. Whether the aglet enclosed the end of a lace on a woman's cap is unclear.

Unlike aglets, buttons were numerous, stylistically varied, and though associated almost exclusively with men, provided considerable detail about the types of attire in which the dead were laid out.

Ten individuals appear to have been interred in pants or breeches that buttoned at the hips, or at the hips and the knees (Burials 10, 181, 203, 259, 325, 326, 379, 392, 415, and possibly 174). With the exception of the young people in Burials 203 and 259, the wearers of pants and breeches were men. Burials 203 and 259 were Late Group interments. The former held a twelve-to-eighteen-year old of undetermined sex. The latter held a seventeen-to-nineteen-year old identified as a probable woman. Because the degree of confidence in the identification was not the highest, it is conceivable that Burial 259 held a slender young man clad in knee breeches. But the idea of a young African woman remaking herself by manipulating everyday dress is not far-fetched (for examples of enslaved Africans in colonial Boston and New York suspected by their owners of intending to pass for the opposite sex, see Greene 1944:141 and White 1991:126; for a white New York woman who sought to obtain work on a privateer by dressing as a man, see Foote 2004:202).

Two men probably wore jackets, as indicated by buttons in the torso area of the body. The jacket buttons from Burial 10 (Late-Middle Group) formed a seven-member set of matched, polished faces. The jacket buttons from Burial 6 (Late Group) also made a striking display: the set included one polished and four gilt faces in different sizes bearing a range of impressed designs, including upright foul anchors (see 12.C, Button Type 6).

Cuff links—two buttons linked together—fastened shirtsleeves during the era when the burial ground was in use. Cuff links were found with six individuals but only in three cases were the cuff links positioned near the wearer's wrists. The men in Burials 238 (Late-Middle Group) and 158 (Late Group) each had a set of cuff links. Just one pair was recovered from the man in Burial 341 (Middle Group), though its location at the wrist also suggests a shirt was worn. It is possible a second pair was not preserved, or that the man had only one pair when interred. The two turquoise enamel cuff link faces associated with the woman in Burial 371 (Middle Group) might not to have been used to fasten a garment. They were located beneath her left upper arm. The probable man in Burial 211 (Late Group) had a turquoise enamel cuff link face on the right clavicle, immediately adjacent to the chin. The man in Burial 392 (Late-Middle Group) also had a cuff link face on the right clavicle; a possible mate was recovered in the lab when the

cervical vertebrae were cleaned. Whether the cuff links from Burials 211 and 392 fastened a shirt with, say, a generous front overlap or a center front is unclear.

Eighteenth-century shirtsleeves were also fastened with buttons, as were shirtfronts and shirt necks. Buttons recovered from the ribs of the probable woman in Burial 259 suggest her knee breeches were topped with a shirt. A bone button and a possible button ring were recovered near the scapula and sternum of the man in Burial 171 (Late Group). This man may have been interred in a shirt that fastened at the neck.

The bone button from Burial 171 may have been covered with fabric or thread, as suggested by the lack of staining associated with a metal cap. This kind of button sometimes fastened 18<sup>th</sup> century undergarments (see 12.B), particularly when its size was relatively small. In addition to Burial 171, bone buttons that may have had fabric or thread covers were associated with seven other interments. Some of these buttons were located in areas that hint of under drawers (the left sciatic notch of the man in Middle Group Burial 353; the pelvis of the man in Late-Middle Group Burial 333; the left acetabulum or hip joint of the man in Late Group Burial 257). Other examples were located in areas that hint of a gown (the ribs of the woman in Middle Group Burial 385) and shirts (the cervical vertebrae of the man in Late-Middle Group Burial 238; the left wrist of the man in Late Group Burial 37). Whether shirts that fastened with covered buttons were street clothes or undergarments in the eyes of their wearers, or in the eyes of the mourners who prepared shirt wearers for burial, is not known. The three bone buttons with the man in Burial 313 (Late Group) were located on the coffin floor beneath the top of the head. Their use as clothing fasteners is doubtful. They might have decorated a hat or been part of a hairstyle (for hat and hair decorations, see Chapter 13).

Some of the buttons (Burials 6, 10, 181, 259, 325, 326, and 415) and cuff links (Burials 158, 238, 341, and 392) would have ornamented as well as fastened clothing. The items were either decorated with gilt or impressed designs, or were arrayed in eye-catching ways. Seven of the ten men interred with what we consider decorative buttons and cuff links were from the Late-Middle and Late Groups. These men were apparently part of a broader trend. As shown in Table 12.2, the proportion of men with durable clothing fasteners increased with each successive temporal group.

<b>Table 12.2.</b>				
<b>Burials of men with buttons or cuff links by temporal group assignment</b>				
	<b>Early</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Late-Middle</b>	<b>Late</b>
<b>Total men*</b>	10	35	19	39
<b>Men with clothing items**</b>	1 (10%)	5 (14.3%)	4 (21.0%)	13 (33.3%)
*Totals include burials with likely preservation (code “y” or “y no cranium”).				
**Burials where clothing items were not clearly associated with an individual’s skeletal remains are not included (see Table 12.1).				

Although the small size of the sample exaggerates the rise of male burial attire with durable fasteners, the rise itself, even if less robust than it appears, is not especially remarkable from an economic view. As we explain in 12.B, the availability of consumer goods like clothing, buttons, and cuff links increased rapidly after the mid 1700s.

Still, the proportion of Late Group men with buttons and cuff links is striking because some of these items clearly fastened street clothing rather than undergarments/shrouds. It is impossible to determine precisely how many men were interred in street clothes. The quandary derives, in part, from the difficulty of differentiating outerwear from undergarments on the basis of button cover and button size. But it also derives from the multiple lives buttons led. For example, some buttons in Late Group burials of men may have been accessories rather than fasteners, such as the buttons beneath the head of the man in Burial 313. Other possible accessories include the bone button and button ring found at the scapula and sternum of Burial 171, which might have been worn on a string necklace, and the bone button at the left wrist of the man in Burial 37, which might have been part of a bracelet.

Even if we had a more precise sense of where to draw the line between under and outer garments, we have no way of knowing whether street clothes constituted the deceased's best outfit, or simply the garments he had on when he died. Men who were buried in the clothes they had on when they died may not have had a circle of kin and neighbors who could supply a shroud or a winding sheet. Street clothes may therefore represent makeshift burial attire—a practical response of community members to the circumstances of death rather than to the economic wherewithal of the deceased per se. Data on coffin-less burials lend support to the idea of street clothes as the burial attire of unusual circumstances. Evidence for clothing was slightly more frequent in burials of men without coffins (see Chapter 10). Coffin-less burials were prominent in the Late Group, when the Revolutionary War and its aftermath disrupted the city.

Some of the buttons recovered in association with skeletal remains may have been talismans or mementos rather than fasteners or jewelry. The likeliest candidate is the copper-alloy button from Early Group Burial 250. It was recovered near the pelvis, in conjunction with a small iron mass and a large glass bead.

### ***12.B. Clothing and fasteners in historical context***

The clearest view of how Africans in 18<sup>th</sup> century Manhattan dressed comes from the *New-York Gazette* and the rival weeklies that issued from the city's print shops. Government printer William Bradford established the *Gazette* in 1725. Within the next two decades three of his former apprentices, John Peter Zenger, Henry DeForeest, and James Parker, started publications of their own (Hildeburn 1895). Their newspapers, and those that followed, brokered New York's commercial world. They carried shipping news, business correspondence, notices of public auctions and private sales, lists of imported and domestic goods, and, as the century progressed, an expanding roster of appeals for the capture of workers who fled from bondage. A command of insider knowledge about the lives of unfree laborers was a key feature of the appeals (White 1991:116-120). In addition to clothing and adornment, writers described linguistic proficiency and workplace skills, elemental signs of status manipulated by runaways, confidence men, and ambitious members of the public at large (Waldstreicher 1999).

An “endless procession of tow cloth shirts and trousers, buckskin breeches, and beaver hats” made its way through Manhattan’s world of print (Hodges and Brown 1994:xxxii). Waistcoats and jackets were also part of African men’s attire. African women typically wore a petticoat (a skirt) and a short gown, an over blouse to present-day eyes. Figures 12.1 through 12.3 illustrate the construction and silhouette of these loose-fitting staple garments, which also clothed workers of European descent.

Although utilitarian garments changed relatively little during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, they varied in texture and color, particularly in urban areas like New York. African men who escaped from Manhattan households between 1732 and 1783 wore breeches cut from a range of durable fabrics, as indicated by the advertisements gathered in Table 12.3, located at the end of the chapter. The coarse, German-made osnaburg linen so ubiquitous in the plantation colonies (Earle 1894:175) outfitted Andrew and York, breeches-wearing New Yorkers who fled from bondage in 1733 and 1749. Breeches were also made from firmly woven worsteds and long-napped shags, sturdy woolen fabrics available in blue, green, red, scarlet, and yellow, along with somber brown and black. The old, red quilted petticoat that Fanny wore in 1758 may have been kin to the one pictured in Figure 12.3. Sal (1766) had a blue version. Suck’s was black on one side and light-colored on the other (1761). Petticoats and short gowns were striped in blue, red, purple, black, and green.

Domestic and imported linen mingled with woolens and cottons produced overseas. Solids and stripes abutted checks and prints. Hector (1750) wore a coarse linen shirt and trousers with a twilled-woolen Kersey pea jacket lined in red. Pompey’s checked shirt was patched and his trousers were striped (1763). Pleasant’s brown short gown was lined in white and her petticoat was cut from red moreen, worsted cotton or wool with a wavy or watered surface (1781). A flowered red-and-green flannel petticoat and a blue, cloth jacket outfitted an unnamed fourteen-to-fifteen-year-old girl (1780).

Familiarity with the clothing Africans wore was not difficult to come by in 18<sup>th</sup> century Manhattan. Europeans and Africans typically lived under the same roof and often worked alongside one another in homes, shops, warehouses, and industrial yards (Foote 2004:72-75). And while there is a fragmentary quality to the evidence from newspaper advertisements, in general black New Yorkers had meager, long-suffering wardrobes, as did working people everywhere (Kidwell and Christman 1974:19-21). A comparison of three women highlights some of the gaps. Jenney may have layered her clothing for warmth after deserting the home of carpenter John Bell in December 1737. She owned two petticoats and two waistcoats, jacket-bodices that closed at the front with laces, pins, or buttons (on the construction of women’s waistcoats, see Baumgarten 2002:120). Hannah, prosecuted in 1716 for stealing a silk muslin handkerchief, a bit of calico, and enough Bristol stuff to make a petticoat and a gown, testified that her mistress had not provided her with anything to wear (cited in Goodfriend 1992:122). In contrast, the African woman George Clarke purchased in 1723 did not want for clothes. Nor did she want for a new pair of stockings and shoes. Contention centered on the provision of two blankets, which Clarke’s secretary had been obliged to supply after the seller had refused (letters of Isaac Bobin, 1718-1730, cited in McKee 1935:121-122).



Figure 12.1  
Men's everyday breeches with fall fronts over the center fly. From left to right: linen cotton (1765-1785), cotton velvet (1785-1825), and yellow "nankeen" cotton (1785-1815). Colonial Williamsburg Collection. Source: Baumgarten (2002:124).



Figure 12.2 (left)  
Working woman's striped linen wool petticoat (1770-1820) topped by a high-waisted short gown made from cotton linen (1800-1820). Colonial Williamsburg Collection. Source: Baumgarten (2002:119).



Figure 12.3 (above)  
Quilted petticoat (1770-1775) made in New York by Margaret Bleeker Ten Eyck. Colonial Williamsburg Collection. Source: Baumgarten (2002:159).



Cloth and clothing were vexed issues for many, perhaps all, colonial Americans. Not only was fabric one of the most expensive consumer goods, it crisscrossed social boundaries the rich and the wellborn found it increasingly difficult to control (Breen 2004:148-192). Domestic cloth production varied regionally in response to shifting

agrarian regimes and non-importation movements (Ulrich 1998:6-7; White and White 1995a:165-168). Yet the output of home spinners never kept pace with the demands of a growing, fashion-minded population. Nor did the output of shop-based swinglers (flax cleaners) and weavers like those Obadiah Wells hired for his spinning factory on Mulberry Street, near the Fresh Water Pond (*New-York Gazette or the Weekly Post-Boy*, May 8, 1766 and December 31, 1767; *New-York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury*, May 4, 1772). Finished cloth was the preeminent import during the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 12.4).<sup>4</sup> It accounted for over one third to one half of the annual expenditure on manufactured goods imported from Great Britain (Shammas 1982:267; Breen 2004:62). A mid-century surge in lower-priced textiles brought a wide variety of imported fabrics into the hands of ordinary people and, to a lesser extent, of the working poor. City dwellers were well entrenched in the empire of goods. Among the textile cargoes auctioned in Manhattan in mid April 1732 were Spanish cloth, Holland linen, English

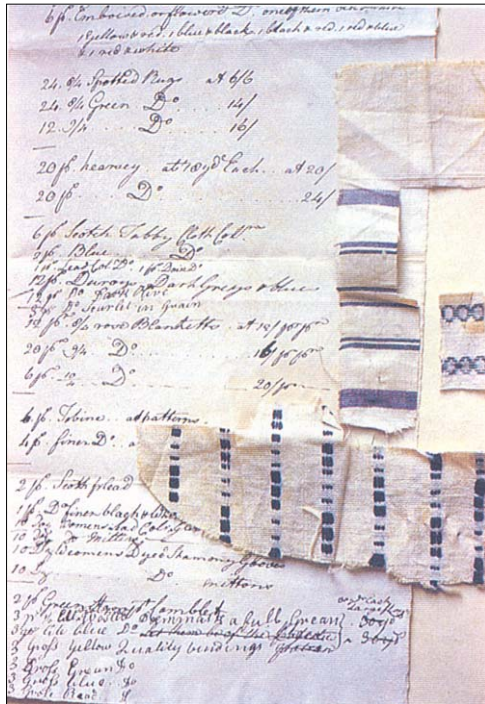


Figure 12.4  
A New York City merchant's order for textiles from England, with swatches of linen (tobine) attached, 1746. Source: Montgomery (1984: plate D-11).

damasks, Indian cherryderries (similar to gingham), striped and flowered Persians (thin, soft silk used for coat lining), China taffetas, and garlicks (linens) from Silesia. Printed calicoes and durants, glazed woolen stuffs touted for their endurance, were available, also, along with buttons, thread, and a few parcels of haberdashery (*New-York Gazette*, March 27, 1732).

New York lawmakers did not follow South Carolina's 1735 lead in prohibiting African workers from wearing fancy, colorful fabrics. But disquiet about the appearance of blacks lodged in a few Manhattan homes. Historian Shane White (1991:199-200) explains that some New Yorkers of European descent suspected smartly dressed Africans of having a larcenous and insubordinate bent. Dry goods were peripatetic in 18<sup>th</sup> century Manhattan, as was the city's workforce. Cloth and clothing shifted from warehouses, shops, and home linen cupboards to tavern-based fencing operations, and rates of

<sup>4</sup> Cloth and clothing also dominated British trade with western Africa, as noted in Chapter 13. B.

prosecution for theft and the keeping of disreputable drinking establishments rose in tandem as the century advanced (see Greenberg 1974:138-140). Africans, in turn, deserted their posts, sometimes with a master's or a mistress's clothing in tow.

Eighteenth-century attire was not always easy to parse. Consider, for example, the garments Sarah (1732) had. Her wardrobe included a suit (a term usually reserved for a complete outfit cut from the same cloth), a petticoat, and three waistcoats, two made from homespun and the third from striped satteen silk. *Homespun* and *silk* evoke separate worlds, one marked by frugality and the other by wealth. Yet these commonplace words were unstable signposts for the fabrics they named. Textile terminology and fiber content varied from place-to-place. *Homespun*, for English speakers, described cloth that was un-milled and coarsely woven, but in American usage *homespun* meant *homemade*. The quality of homemade cloth reflected the skills of the sorter, the carder, the spinner, the washer, and the weaver. Its texture ranged from coarse to fine, and it attired housewives as well as servants and the enslaved (Ulrich 2001:84-93; Baumgarten 2002:78, 114-115).

*Satteen silk* was ambiguous, too. *Sateen* denoted a cotton textile with a shiny, satin-like face. *Satin* was a twilled silk. *Silk* was sometimes blended with wool. Sarah's owner, merchant Joseph Reade, may have been hedging his bets about whether her striped waistcoat had been cut from the genuine article or a lower-priced imitation, but he did not claim that she had lifted her clothes (for 18<sup>th</sup> century fabric terminology, see Montgomery 1984 and Cunnington et al. 1960).

Like all clothing worn during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Sarah's garments were sewn by hand. She may have cut and stitched them herself. Sarah worked as a domestic, as did many of the women interred at the African Burial Ground; and Reade said that she was handy with all kinds of housework. She probably sewed the family linens. Sheets and undergarments (shifts, drawers, nightshirts) were typically made at home (see Kidwell and Christman 1974:25).

Ready-made garments supplemented the apparel women stitched in parlors and kitchens. Some of the ready-made items black New Yorkers wore were geared to sailors and soldiers (Kersey pea coats, wide-legged trousers, regimental attire). Other items were marketed to the public at large (men's shirts and waistcoats, women's cloaks and quilted petticoats, knee-length woolen and cotton stockings). Whether imported from England or locally produced, ready-made clothing often "bore the mark of a second-class product" (Kidwell and Christman 1974:31). Unlike bespoke suits and gowns, ready-made garments were not cut and draped with a particular person in mind. The generalization holds for leather breeches, which were the province of specialized tailors like John Baster. Like many ambitious artisans who hung out their signs in Manhattan, Baster sought patronage from gentlemen who wore custom-fitted leather breeches for leisure and sports (see Baumgarten 2002:125). But "all sorts" of breeches could be had at Baster's shop opposite the Old Slip Market. The phrase was a tailor's deft way of conveying his willingness to supply ready-made items for workingmen (*New-York Gazette*, October 5, 1761).

Despite its loose fit, utilitarian attire registered a few fashion trends. The waistlines on women's short gowns migrated upward toward the end of the 1700s—the short gown pictured in Figure 12.2 has a high or “Empire” waist (on the design and construction of the short gown, see Kidwell 1978). Necklines and bodices continued to be fastened primarily with drawstrings made with cords and tapes (Figure 12.5).<sup>5</sup> Leather and cloth breeches rode low on the hips. After 1730, breeches acquired a fall or flap front over the center fly, which increased the number of buttons needed to keep the breeches in place (Tortora and Eubank 1998:232).



Figure 12.5.  
Self-enclosed casing for a drawstring, on a gown with set-in sleeves (1800-1810). Colonial Williamsburg Collection. Source: Baumgarten (2002:152).

### *Buttons*

Attention to appearance included buttons as well as clothes. The writers of runaway advertisements noted the color, size, and placement of buttons on men's attire and remarked when buttons were missing from a garment, or when alternative fasteners were used. Pompey (1763), for example, was bereft of buttons—apparently his linsey-woolsey double-breasted jacket had none. Tom's striped jacket was tied with pieces of fabric tape (1777). Charles (1762) and Jack (1762) had waistcoats that fastened with silver cord. Hanibal's brown short jacket closed with hooks and eyes (1758).

While the runaway advertisements lack the visual clarity of a salesman's sample card (Figure 12.6), they highlight one of the ornamental contributions buttons made to everyday clothing. Practical fasteners doubled as adornment by playing upon color contrasts. White and yellow metal buttons fastened brown, blue, and red jackets, surtouts (overcoats), and waistcoats (Jasper, 1758; Jack, 1773; Cain, 1780; Tony, 1780; Jack 1762; Prince, 1761). Yellow and gilt buttons enlivened blue and scarlet coat lapels (Louis, 1777; Tom, 1781). A blue coat sported buttons covered with silver thread (Norway, 1768).

Metal buttons and cuff links also carried eye-catching designs. A gold button with a “basket” motif fastened the old red officer's coat Adam (1782) wore. The motif may have resembled the cross-weave stamped on the metal-capped bone buttons from Burial 181, or on the sample attached to the salesman's card (middle column, second row from bottom). Eleven of the breeches' buttons from Burial 259 were ridged. Three of their

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<sup>5</sup> Only one woman listed in Table 12.3 had buttons on her clothes. The buttons were bright yellow, and they fastened a long-sleeved blue cloth jacket (Peg, 1781). References to buttons on short gowns are scarce, suggesting that buttons were atypical (Kidwell 1978:56). An example of a short gown fastened with pins can be found in Chapter 11.



Figure 12.6.  
Example of a salesman's  
sample card, circa 1780, for  
buttons made from pinchbeck, a  
copper alloy that retains its  
polish. Source: Albert and Kent  
(1949:392).

goods store, or a specialty shop. Henry Whiteman, a brass button maker who served his apprenticeship in Philadelphia, prospered in mid 18<sup>th</sup> century New York. Ten years after gaining a foothold in Manhattan's lively garment sector, Whiteman supplied buttons at wholesale and retail prices under a Buttons and Buckles sign (*New-York Gazette Revived in the Weekly Post-Boy*, September 17, 1750; *New-York Gazette*, October 13, 1760). Edward Andrews, a London-trained cutler, carried a choice assortment of buttons for gentlemen, ladies, and others (*New-York Gazette and the Weekly Post-Boy, Supplement*, May 18, 1752). Braziers like Thomas Yates and William Scandrett offered sundry kinds of buttons and cuff links at reasonable rates (*New-York Gazette*, November 19, 1759 and April 16, 1764).

stylistic kin appear on the card (column one, second row from top; column two, fourth row from bottom; column three, third row from bottom).

Not all button faces, of course, were designed for the light of day. Buttons covered with thread and cloth joined the ranks of undergarment fasteners in the decades after 1650 (Cunnington and Cunnington 1981:16). Although a variety of undergarments were available for men as the 18<sup>th</sup> century progressed, the routine use of ready-made and custom-fitted underwear within and across occupational groups is not known. Men's under drawers are a case in point. Cut full from plain-weave cotton or woolen flannel, under drawers fastened with fewer front buttons than breeches, and lacked the flap over the center fly. But long-tailed shirts tucked into trousers often performed the work of under drawers. Under waistcoats and undershirts also added warmth to men's attire. Based on examples from costume collections, the latter were cut like outer shirts and fastened with a covered button at the neck, or with covered buttons down the front (see Baumgarten 1992). Workingwomen's undergarments consisted of a chemise or a slip beneath a petticoat and a gown. The chemise and the slip typically fastened with tapes, strings, or ribbons (Tortorra and Eubank 1998:236).

Ready-made clothing would have come with buttons already attached, but home sewers and ordinary consumers in need of fasteners might have scrutinized the wares in a peddler's sack, a market stall, a dry



Figure 12.7.  
Gold octagonal cuff links on an infant's shirt  
sleeve (1730-1760). Colonial Williamsburg  
Collection. Source: Baumgarten (2002:159).

Popular styles of buttons and cuff links could be had in a range of materials and sizes. Burials 238, 341, and 398 had copper-alloy versions of the gold octagonal cuff links shown in Figure 12.7.

Buttons were also recycled. For example, the bone buttons from Burial 313, which may have been covered with fabric or thread, might originally have been button backs that were modified or reused. Recycling, modification, and functional substitution—using a readily available item to perform the task of an item that has become scarce—were a commonplace of African and African Diasporic life

during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (see Posnansky 1999:31-33). Personal adornments were modified and recycled, too, as explained in Chapter 13.

### ***12.C. The button/cuff link/aglet assemblage and associated cloth***

The assemblage included 133 buttons or portions of buttons, 3 aglets, and one grommet or eyelet from a clothing fastener. Cuff links were also recovered, including 2 sets (2 pair of linked faces) and 3 single pairs (two faces only). Materials represented among the clothing fasteners included copper alloy, pewter, bone and wood.

#### Recovery, condition and treatment, chain of custody

Almost all the buttons and cuff links were recovered during the field excavation of the burials. A few were found during cleaning of skeletal remains in the laboratory (the pewter button from Burial 174; bone-backed buttons and bone button fragments from Burials 181, 238, and 257; copper-alloy buttons associated with Burials 379 and 387; a possible button ring from Burial 313; a cuff link remnant from Burial 392). In some cases, items were identified as button or cuff link fragments only after initial cleaning (the shanks from Burial 10; the button ring from Burial 171; a copper-alloy button from Burial 276; a cuff link crown from Burial 379). All of the aglets were recovered in the field but were identified as pins at the time. They were recognized as aglets only after research on 18<sup>th</sup> century clothing had been conducted, and the archaeological literature had been searched for examples of clothing artifacts from the period when the burial ground was in use.

Several items were recorded in the field but were missing from the laboratory at the time the Howard University Archaeology Team came on board. Among the items logged as

“missing” were the cuff links from Burials 181 and 387, and the pewter button attributed to Burial 361.

Textiles were found in association with a number of the metal clothing items, as listed in Table 12.4. Conservators noted a textile impression in association with the bone-and-copper-alloy buttons from Burial 181. Subsequent examination indicated that the metal faces of these buttons were impressed with a cross-weave design; remnants of the design are shown in the inventory (photograph of Catalog # 976-B.002). Field notes on Burial 6 indicated possible textile fragments had adhered to the cranium but none were recovered.

Bone buttons were generally very stable. They were cleaned and treated with a barrier coating. Metal buttons were normally desalinized in de-ionized baths and mechanically cleaned with a scalpel, then vacuum impregnated with BTA and B-72. The cuff links from Burials 238 and 341 were treated with a 1% solution of formic acid to loosen and soften the corrosion products, then cleaned a second time in de-ionized water. The aglets were treated the same as the pins. Staff of John Milner Associates took an initial series of photographs.

<b>Table 12.4.</b> <b>Textile and leather fragments associated with clothing fasteners</b>		
<b>Burial/ Catalog #</b>	<b>Type of fragment</b>	<b>Comments</b>
B10 # 234-B.012	wool, plain weave	Location not recorded, but the fragment would most likely have been attached to a button.
B22 # 344-B.004	linen	Location not recorded. An aglet and pins were recovered with the burial. The linen fragment may have been part of a shroud.
B194 # 1109-B.002	organic matter	A fragment of organic matter, possibly a leather button cover, was associated with a copper-alloy shank. The shank may have been from a poorly preserved bone or wooden button.
B203 # 1174-B.001 to .008	leather button covers	Eight wooden buttons were evidently covered in leather.
B259 # 1249-B.002- .004; .006; .011; 012; .017; .019; .021-.024	wool, linen, and possible leather	Woven fine wool fragments were associated with some of the breeches buttons. One of these had a well-preserved buttonhole. Conservators identified linen fragments, but did not record which buttons these fragments were associated with. Wooden buttons appeared to have leather covers.
B278 # 1275-UNC.001	textile (missing)	Conservators noted a textile fragment attached to the back of a copper-alloy button, but it was not handed over to the Howard University Archaeology Team.
B326 # 1854-B.009	organic matter	Field records state that a small fragment of cloth as well as a bit of possible hair had adhered to one of the buttons. A small fragment of unidentifiable organic material was cataloged (not photographed), but was not identifiable



<p><b>Table 12.4.</b> <b>Textile and leather fragments associated with clothing fasteners</b></p>		
<b>Burial/ Catalog #</b>	<b>Type of fragment</b>	<b>Comments</b>
B371 # 1875-B.002	wool, weave not determinable	Fragment was associated with an iron button that appears to have been intrusive to the burial.
B379 # 1906-B.001	possible leather button cover	The preserved remains of one of the buttons (# 1906-B.001) may have been from a leather cover or, alternatively, from the outer portion of a wooden crown.
B392 #2039-B.001-.003; .006; .007; .011; .012	wool, fine weave with an S-twist; one of the fragments included a buttonhole	Fragments of fine wool were recovered in association with the bone button backs. One from a button at the right knee included a well-preserved buttonhole, 1 mm wider than the associated button.
B403 # 2067-B.004	textile, simple weave, black color	It is not clear whether the cloth fragments were associated with particular buttons.
B415 # 2097-B.003; .005; .007; .008	wool buttonhole fragment; wool fragment attached to coffin wood; possible leather	Due to a laboratory processing error it is not now possible to identify the specific button associated with the wool buttonhole. Another woolen fragment was attached to coffin wood.

Buttons, cuff links, and aglets were re-examined by Howard University Archaeology Team personnel during 1998-99 and in 2001, and all fragments were counted. John Abbott took final high-quality photographs of the buttons and cuff links in August 2001. At that time, the assemblage was packed by the Bronx Council of the Arts and shipped by Artex to its art storage facility in Landover, Maryland, pending preparation for reburial. The assemblage was re-inventoried by the Army Corps of Engineers at the Landover facility in 2003, and then transshipped back to New York. Items that National Park Service staff selected for replication were sent to Colonial Williamsburg for study; these included buttons and cufflinks from Burials 6, 10, 181, 214, 250, 313, 392, 403, 405, and 415.

Items not selected for replication were sent to Jon Abbott for digital photography in September 2003. A series of high-quality digital photographs was taken from many angles for each individual item, allowing for future analysis. All clothing-related items were placed in coffins for reburial in October of 2003.

### Typology

Here we categorize the types of clothing fasteners represented in the assemblage. The types are based on materials employed in the manufacturing process (organic, metallic, or composite) and structural attributes. An attempt will be made to correlate these types

with those represented in the following published sources: Noël-Hume (1969); South (1964); Hinks (1988); Cotter (1968); Stone (1974); and Olsen (1963). Other attributes may be more important for understanding button acquisition and use, for instance the number of parts (which may reflect cost/expense of manufacture), decoration, the potential for re-use and modification, durability and longevity, cost, and availability of specific imports. We note these attributes in the inventory where possible.

The key characteristics of the buttons and cuff links are summarized in the typology in Table 12.5. Due to the small quantity of aglets and cuff links recovered, no attempt was made to ascribe these objects to particular types.

*Type 1: Bone backs or molds for thread covered buttons*

Type 1 buttons are flat disks cut from animal bone with a single, centrally located drilled hole. The preferred raw material appears to have been the wide, flat, rib bones from large mammal species. Sections of these bones were easy to secure, thereby preventing movement during the cutting process. The button blanks were cut and the hole drilled at the same time by the use of specially designed metal bits that were outfitted on a hand or powered drill press (see the Diderot illustration of a mid 18<sup>th</sup> century French manufacturer in Albert and Kent 1949:28). With the use of more refined bits, this process would also form the offset rim on the back face for the attachment of a metal cap. It should be noted that once the button and hole were finished, the button blanks could be used “as is,” while those that were not finished or considered defective could be put to an alternative use. Also called a “thread-back” button, these types of fasteners could be used either plain faced with a thread shank or with a cloth or thread covering that was sewn directly onto the garment (Figure 12.8; Albert and Kent 1949:44-45). Small diameter sizes, in the range of 9-15 mm, were worn on waistcoats or shirts, while larger sizes, measuring 16-29 mm, were intended for coats. It is assumed these types of buttons were of low cost and easy to manufacture.



Figure 12.8.  
Diagram showing the process for covering a button blank or button ring with cloth. Source: Dupuis (2003).

A total of nineteen buttons of this type were recovered from eight burials at the African Burial Ground: Burials 37, 171, 238, 257, 313, 333, 353, and 385. None of the examples in the collection were decorated and no textile remains were recovered in association with any of the buttons. In most cases these were the only type of button found with the individual. They were not used in conjunction with metal caps.



*Type 2: Copper-alloy rings for thread or cloth-covered buttons*

Type 2 buttons are composed of small copper-alloy rings manufactured of drawn wire and covered by thread or cloth. The ends of the wire were apparently braised together to form a 10-12 mm diameter ring. Also known as Dorset buttons, this type of button was made in England in the 17<sup>th</sup> century; production continued into the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Albert and Kent 1949:90; Luscomb 1967:57).

Two buttons of this type were recovered at the African Burial Ground, from Burials 171 and 313. None of the examples in the collection contained the thread covering, nor were any textiles found in association with the buttons.

*Type 3: Composite button, wood with a non-metallic covering and copper-alloy wire loop shank*

Type 3 buttons are composed of a wooden body, a metal shank, and possibly a cloth or leather covering that was sewn over the button face. The buttons are cut from fine-grained hardwoods, such as apple, yew, or boxwood that are lathe-turned into long dowel-like rods. Individual buttons blanks are then sawn from the dowel's end. A single central hole is drilled through the wooden disk (Albert and Kent 1949:26). On the examples recovered from the African Burial Ground, the front face of the button contained a circular recessed area, evidently required to secure and provide space for the copper-alloy wire shank. Finally, the button's face and the exposed ends of the shanks were covered with leather or cloth. Painting or staining the button a dark color was an alternative surface treatment. These buttons measured approximately 16 mm wide.

To prevent the shank from pulling through the button face, the wire loops were attached and held in place in a variety of ways. In some of the specimens recovered from the African Burial Ground the ends of the shank appear to have either been splayed or twisted; in others the ends were crimped to form a wider protuberance or, possibly, a piece of wire was wound around the ends of the shank. Beyond the use of pin shanks (a wire that is pushed through the body of the button and is looped back to form a shank), the type of shank observed at the African Burial Ground has not been detailed in the literature on button manufacture.

A total of 23 buttons of this type were recovered from five burials (Burials 10, 194, 203, 214, 259, and 379) at the African Burial Ground.

*Type 4: Composite button with a stamped metal cap and bone back with single hole for a copper-alloy wire loop shank*

Type 4 buttons consist of a die stamped, copper-alloy sheet-metal cap, usually decorated, covering a bone back and a fastener composed of a copper-alloy wire loop shank. The bone backs were finely turned on both sides with a single, central hole, a concave front, a convex back, and a well defined offset rim. The loose fitting wire loop shanks were placed within the concave space between the cap and front of the button back prior to the

cap's attachment. There was some variation in the shape of the wire loop shank: in one example from Burial 181 (Catalog # 967-B.006) the exterior portion of the shank appears round in cross-section, while the ends of the shank (within the space between the front and back of the button) were flattened and splayed outward. The caps are decorated by either die stamping or repoussé and subsequently gold plated. This type of button was manufactured throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century according to Albert and Kent (1949:29).

Four buttons of this type were recovered at the African Burial Ground, all from Burial 181. No textiles were found in association with any of the bone-backed buttons.

*Type 5: Bone-backed buttons with multiple perforations (originally composite buttons with stamped caps)*

Type 5 buttons are very similar to Type 4 buttons, the main difference being the manner in which the button was attached to the garment. As originally designed, the button was manufactured with a die stamped, copper-alloy, sheet metal cap, usually decorated, that was fitted over a bone back. The back was finely turned on both sides with a concave front and convex back and a defined, offset rim on the back. Each of the specimens contained four drilled holes and a shallow central impression on the back, which is produced during the manufacturing process. In contrast to the Type 4 loop shank set in a single hole, the holes in the Type 5 back are laced with thread, catgut, or wire to form a shank.

Only the bone backs were present in the burial ground assemblage. There was a slight greenish tinge on some of the examples. It is possible that the buttons' metal components had been removed and the bone backs reused as simple sew-through buttons. Alternatively, all trace of the metal caps had decomposed beyond recognition. No other components of these buttons, such as pieces of metal caps or wire shanks, were present in the assemblage. This was a common button type during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

A total of ten buttons of this type were recovered at the African Burial Ground, all from Burial 392. Fragments of fine wool were recovered in association with the bone button backs. A wool fragment from a button at the right knee included a well-preserved, thread-finished buttonhole.

*Type 6: Cast two-piece all metallic buttons*

Type 6 buttons consist of a cast, two-piece button with the crown cast around a separate, wire-looped eye in a raised or cone-shaped boss of metal. This type also includes specimens in which the loop shank was braised directly to the button's back. The crown face was usually flat or slightly convex, occasionally with a beveled or cupped back edge. In most specimens any marks derived from the manufacturing process had been removed as a result of the back being hand filed or machine spun. In the latter method individual buttons are set in a collet or chuck, a device used for holding cylindrical objects in a lathe, and spun at a high speed while a hand-held chisel is employed to cut and trim excess metal castings from the back and boss (Olsen 1963:552). This type of button was

usually covered with cloth or decorated with a variety of motifs produced during the manufacturing process. Decorated buttons without cloth covers were also given a high polish or, alternatively, were plated with gold or tin.

A total of 35 buttons of this type were recovered at the African Burial Ground from a total of 13 burials (Burials 6, 10, 181, 191, 243, 250, 259, 276, 278, 325, 366, 403, and 405).

Two of the buttons of this type found with Burial 6 were decorated with anchors and gilt. As described in the inventory, the two specimens did not match, though based on their locations they are believed to have adorned a jacket or coat. Anchor buttons were used on British naval officers' uniforms from 1774, and may have been more generally available in New York just before, during and after the Revolution (see Troiani 2001:9-10 for illustrations of British naval officers' anchor buttons). Because buttons were often obtained separately clothing and were typically recycled, we do not identify this man as a naval officer based on his burial in a jacket bearing two anchor buttons. The motifs may have signaled his occupation, whether as a sailor or a member of the navy, but they also may have been chosen for aesthetic or other reasons.

*Type 7: Cast three-piece all metallic buttons*

Type 7 buttons are dome shaped all-metal buttons composed of separately cast fronts and backs. The two halves are joined or braised at a high temperature with the aid of a fluxing agent. Prior to joining the two portions a separate wire loop eye (the third piece) is inserted through a single hole in the back plate and braised or set in place. Distinctive characteristics of this type of button are the presence of an additional small hole(s) on the button's back. These openings allow the heated, expanding gases within the hollow space to escape during the braising process, which would prevent the two halves from joining. This type of button was usually decorated during the casting process, or, as was the case for some specimens from the African Burial Ground, the entire button was gilded.

A total of 24 buttons of this type were recovered at the African Burial Ground, from Burials 10, 181, 214, 271, 326, 379, 403, and 415. Seventeen of the buttons were in matching sets found with the two individuals in Burials 326 and 415. Evidence of gilding was preserved on buttons in Burial 415.

**Table 12.5.**  
**Button types recovered at the African Burial Ground**

ABG Type	Noel-Hume/ South type	Hinks type	Olsen/Cotter type	Stone type	Notes	Description
<b>Organic buttons</b>						
<b>Bone backs or molds for thread covered buttons</b>						
1	15 (1726-1865)	9A1w waistcoat or shirt, 9A1c coat (1680-1810)	Non functional button blank	Cat. 1-Type 1	found in 1770-1780 contexts	Cut, flat disk with a single central hole, with or without turning marks and off-set rim on at least one faces, small diameter for waistcoat or shirt – 9-15mm, large diameter for coat – 16-29mm
<b>Composite buttons</b>						
<b>Copper-alloy ring for thread covered buttons</b>						
2	Not listed	9B1 (1750-1840)	Not listed	Class V, SA T1 (?)	Post-1750 manufacture in England	Copper-alloy ring with soldered ends – provides framework for thread or cloth covering – shirt button
<b>Composite button with a non-metallic cap, wood back, and copper alloy wire loop shank</b>						
3	Not listed	With single hole type 9A2 – but states single hole was not functional	Not listed	Class V, SA (?)	Hinks (1988:89) notes that wood buttons were found on inexpensive clothing	Turned and cut wood disk with a single central hole, circular recessed area on one face, copper alloy wire shank held in place with a wire flange or crimped end; possibly covered with leather or cloth, may also be painted or stained a dark color
<b>Composite button with a stamped metal cap, bone back, and copper alloy wire loop shank</b>						
4	4 (1726-1776)	5B3 (1750-1810)	Type B variant 1700-1790	Class III, SA	found in c.1784 contexts (Hinks 1988:125-126)	Stamped sheet metal cap, usually decorated, with bone back, finely turned on both sides with a single central hole, concave front and convex back, offset rim. Wire loop shank: exterior portion of shank appears round in cross-section, while the ends of shank (within the space between front and back of the button) are flattened and splayed outward – Shank is loose fitting.

**Table 12.5.**  
**Button types recovered at the African Burial Ground**

<b>ABG Type</b>	<b>Noel-Hume/ South type</b>	<b>Hinks type</b>	<b>Olsen/Cotter type</b>	<b>Stone type</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Composite button with a stamped metal cap, with perforated (4-hole) bone back</b>						
5	3 with cap (1726-1776)	5B2 (1750-1810)	Type B (1700-1790)	Class III, SA		Bone back, finely turned on both sides with four holes, concave front and convex back, also has an offset rim. No shank, cap has been removed so as to be used as a simple sew thru.
<b>Metal Buttons</b>						
<b>Cast 2 and 3-piece all metallic buttons with wire loop shank</b>						
6	Types 7, 8, 9, and 11 (1726-1776). Type 11 also occurs in mid-19 <sup>th</sup> century	Type 2 - 1690s –to early 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Type C, D, and E (1750-1812)	CI, SD		Cast 2-piece button - crown cast around a separate wire looped eye in a raised or cone-shaped boss – mold marks have been removed by the back being hand filed or machine spun
7	Types 2 and 6 (1726-1776).	Type 3 - 1680s –1770s	Not listed	CII, SA		Cast 3-piece button - cast front and back, flux joined after a separate wire loop eye is inserted through back plate – shank is either braised or loose, w/o holes (1 or 2) on back
Sources: Noel-Hume (1969); South (1964); Hinks (1988); Cotter (1968); Stone (1974); Olsen (1963).						

## Button/fastener inventory by individual burial

### *Burial 6*

Eight buttons were recovered from Burial 6, a Late Group interment of an adult, probably a man, between twenty-five and thirty years old. Five of the buttons were evidently attached to a coat or jacket in which the individual was buried, but as Figure 12.9 illustrates, they did not form a matched set. These buttons were, for the most part, dissimilar in decoration and manufacture. The two buttons with anchor motifs did not match.



Figure 12.9.  
Buttons from Burial 6  
associated with a man's  
coat or jacket.  
Top: Catalog #'s 219-  
B.001, .004, and .003.  
Bottom: Catalog #'s  
219-B.002 and .008.  
Largest button is 26 mm  
diameter.  
Photograph by Jon  
Abbott.

Button 219-B.001 was made of cast copper alloy that had been gilded on each side; it had an applied wire loop shank (Figure 12.10). The 17 mm diameter button was decorated with an upright foul anchor device on a plain ground. Both the centrally located device and the gilding were well preserved. In finely executed detail, the anchor's rope extended down from the left side of the ring, passing behind the end of the left stock (a guide to anchor terminology is in Figure 12.12). It then looped first to the right, passing in front of the shank, and then to the left, passing behind the shank. The rope continued to the left, passing in back of the bill of the left fluke, then looped to the right below the anchor's left arm and crown. Finally, it passed behind the center-point of the right arm, ending with a short section of rope that extended down from the anchor's right bill.

Button 219-B.002 (Figure 12.11) was comparable to the previous example in terms of manufacture, decoration, and preservation. This button, however, was of heavier construction and had a larger loop shank and a more concave back. The primary differences between the two buttons were in the details of the anchor design, in particular the use of a chain rather than a rope. Overall, the upright foul anchor on the second



Figure 12.10. (left)  
Button, copper-alloy, gilt.  
Burial 6, Catalog # 219-B.001  
Diameter 17mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.11. (right)  
Button, copper-alloy, gilt.  
Burial 6, Catalog # 219-B.002  
Diameter 17 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

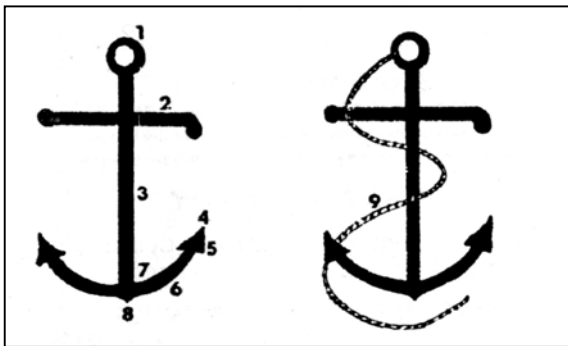


Figure 12.12.  
Diagram of anchor device. Source: Luscomb  
(1974:32)

Upright anchor (left), upright foul anchor (right)

- |         |          |
|---------|----------|
| 1 ring  | 6 arm    |
| 2 stock | 7 throat |
| 3 shank | 8 crown  |
| 4 bill  | 9 rope   |
| 5 fluke |          |

button, while just as detailed, was slightly larger in scale, and covered more of the button's face. Another minor difference was the distance between the top ring and the shank, which in the second button was negligible. The layout of the "chain" in relation to the anchor was essentially identical to button 219-B.001.

Button 219-B.003 was a 17 mm copper-alloy disc with a wire shank fastened to the back during the casting process (Figure 12.9, top row, right). The ends of the loop shank were set in a cast boss of metal and the back had been spun and cut. The gilt button evidently contained a central decoration on a plain ground, but due to corrosion no elements survived.

Button 219-B.004 was also a 17 mm copper-alloy fastener with a wire shank attached during the casting (see Figure 12.9, top row, middle). The lack of cut marks on the back seemed to indicate the button had not been spun. However, the metal boss surrounding the ends of the shank had been hand trimmed or filed in the area adjacent to the long axis of the shank, leaving a mound of metal along one side. The button did not appear to have been decorated beyond a possible high polish.



Button 219-B.008 (see Figure 12.9, bottom row, right), the final whole button, was of cast copper alloy and was found on the sacrum. The 26 mm diameter button, one of the collection's largest, was manufactured with an alpha loop shank, and appeared to have had a stamped decoration on its face. Not only was this button comparable in size to most of the coins recovered from the burial ground, there appeared to be some design elements on the face that were similar to coins of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Poor preservation, however, makes it impossible to determine if a coin was converted into a button or a coin die was used to strike the decoration.

Portions of at least three pewter buttons were recovered from the burial (twelve fragments, Catalog # 219-B.007). Field notes indicated that a pewter fragment was located on the sacrum. However, the exact size, shape, and type of manufacture of the pewter buttons could not be determined due to their fragmentary state. Field notes indicated possible textile fragments adhered to the cranium but none were recovered.

### *Burial 10*

Thirteen buttons were recovered from Burial 10, which held a forty-to-forty-five-year-old man. The burial is assigned to the Late-Middle Group. Seven buttons found on the torso apparently fastened a coat or jacket (Figure 12.13). One button was located at the right foot. An additional five buttons were inferred from wire shanks (unique objects unassociated with the coat buttons) recovered from the lower right leg. The shank fragments likely represented the remnants of composite buttons constructed of organic materials, such as wood or bone, and metal. In contrast to Burial 6, the coat buttons recovered from Burial 10 formed a matched set.



Figure 12.13.  
Buttons from Burial 10  
associated with a man's  
coat or jacket.  
Catalog #s 234-B.001 –  
234-B.007.  
Button diameters 17  
mm.  
Photograph by Jon  
Abbott.



The coat buttons were cast copper-alloy with a copper-alloy wire alpha loop shank applied during manufacture. All of the buttons measured 17 mm in diameter and, with the exception of a slightly beveled edge, all were undecorated and had evidence of a polished face. The conservators' notes stated that the buttons were possibly tin plated on the front surface. The backs of these buttons were turned and had lost the upper, rounded portion of the eye shank.

Button 234-B.013 was a domed two-part copper-alloy button with a copper-alloy shank cast in place. Recovered from the area of the right foot, the button measured 16 mm in diameter and while the face was corroded, the button did not appear to have been decorated (Figure 12.14). The front had a ground edge.

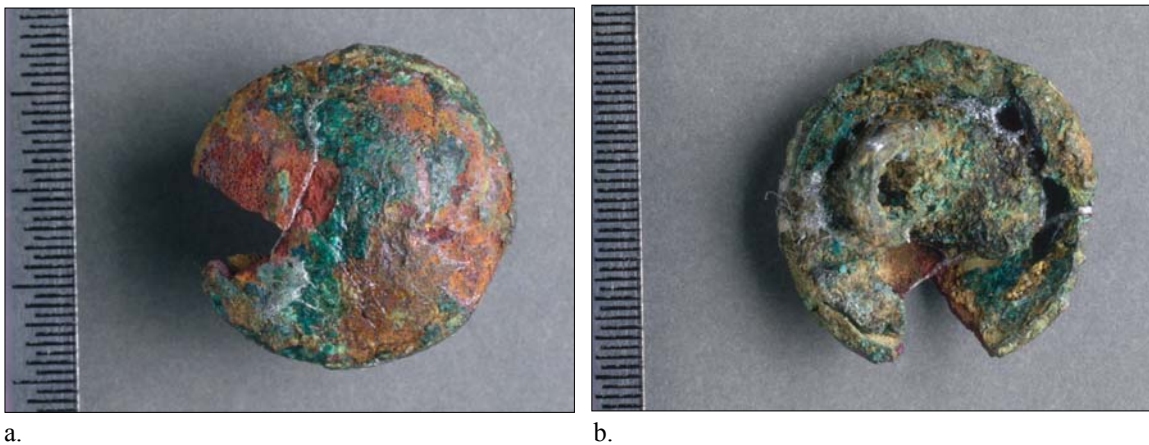


Figure 12.14. (a. face, b. back)  
Button, copper alloy.  
Burial 10, Catalog #234-B.013.  
Diameter 16 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

The five copper-alloy wire shanks recovered from the right leg were identified in the field as “eyelets.” The lack of any corresponding “hooks” would indicate the items (Catalog #s 234-B.008 – .012) were probably the shank portions from composite buttons, which presumably, were covered with cloth. The ends of each shank were either bent flat or splayed outward; this would have prevented the shank from pulling through the front of the button. One shank had a tight twist at the end, resembling a continuous loop (Figure 12.15, Catalog #234-B.010). Other well-preserved examples of this type of button shank were found with Burials 259 and 379.

The conservation inventory listed a cuff link fragment, but no such item was present when the Howard University Archaeology Team began its work. It is likely the item was actually one of the buttons or button shanks. A textile fragment (Catalog # 234-B.012; Figure 12.17), identified as plain weave wool, was recovered and though no provenience was recorded, it is likely the fragment was associated with one of the buttons.



Figure 12.15. (left)  
Button shank, copper alloy.  
Burial 10, Catalog # 234-B.010.  
Length 11 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.16. (right)  
Button shank, copper alloy.  
Burial 10, Catalog # 234-B.008.  
Length 11 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.17. (left)  
Textile fragment, plain-weave wool.  
Burial 10, Catalog # 234-B.012.  
Length 20 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

## *Burial 22*



Figure 12.18.  
Aglet, copper alloy.  
Burial 22, Catalog # 344-B.003. Length 11 mm. Photograph by Jon Abbott.

A single aglet was recovered from Burial 22, a Middle Group interment of a young child between two-and-a-half and four-and-a-half years old. The item was not noted during excavation and its location on the body is not known. The aglet may have been mistaken for a pin; three pins were recorded clearly *in situ* on the torso, with an additional one on top of the skull. A tiny fragment of linen was also recovered from the burial.

### *Burial 32*

A fragment from a cast, one-piece pewter button was recovered from Burial 32, a Middle Group interment of a man between fifty and sixty years of age. The size and shape of the button (Catalog # 420-UNK.002) could not be determined. There was no mention or depiction of the button in the field records.

### *Burial 37*

A turned bone button with a drilled center hole was recovered near the left wrist of the forty-five-to-fifty-five-year-old man in Burial 37, a Late Group interment. The 13 mm button (Figure 12.19) apparently had been covered with cloth or thread and had a thread shank, an assessment based on the absence of staining typically found on bone buttons that had copper-alloy metal caps (see Burial 181 for an example).



Figure 12.19.  
Button, bone.  
Burial 37, Catalog # 460-B.001.  
Diameter 13 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

### *Burial 158*

A pair of round gilt copper-alloy cuff links was recovered from each wrist of the twenty-to-thirty-year-old man in Burial 158, a Late Group interment. The pair from the left wrist (Catalog # 903-B.001) is shown in Figure 12.20. It matched the pair from the right wrist (Catalog # 903-B.002). The cuff links measured 17 mm in diameter and had cast U-shaped shanks, possibly diagnostic of the 17<sup>th</sup> century or the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Noël Hume 1961:383). With the exception of the gold plating and a possible raised edge, there were no discernable decorative elements.



Figure 12.20.  
Cuff links, copper alloy, gilt.  
Burial 158, Catalog # 903-B.001.  
Face diameter 17 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



### *Burial 171*

Three buttons, two made from animal bone and one represented by a copper-alloy button ring, were recovered about the body and within the coffin from Burial 171, a Late Group interment of a man between forty-four and sixty years of age. The bone buttons each had a single, central drilled hole. The larger of the buttons (Catalog # 931-B.002) was found beside the right femur. It measured 22 mm in diameter and was turned on both sides with a relatively wide offset rim (Figure 12.21). The offset rim was not as well manufactured as the examples of this button type from Burial 181.



Figure 12.21. (left)  
Button, bone, turned.  
Burial 171, Catalog # 931-B.002.  
Diameter 22 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.22. (right)  
Button, bone, turned.  
Burial 171, Catalog # 931-B.001.  
Diameter 10 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

The smaller bone button (931-B.001), from the right scapula, measured 10 mm in diameter and was a less “finished” object. In addition to being turned only on one side, leaving a rough, natural surface (the inner wall of the bone), the edge of the button was left untrimmed from the cutting tool (Figure 12.22). The absence of metal shanks or any evidence of metallic staining on the bone buttons indicated they were thread or cloth-covered, and attached with a thread shank. The edges of the sewing holes, particularly on the smaller button, were worn and abraded. It is possible these buttons were originally button backs that were modified or reused, either by removing the metal cap or by reusing buttons that had lost their shanks.

The remains of a copper-alloy ring were found on the sternum. The ring (Catalog # 931-B.003) may have functioned as the frame for a thread or cloth button (Figure 12.23). The curved fragments were identified initially as shroud pins. The smaller of the bone buttons may have fastened a shirt collar, but the locations of the buttons do not point strongly to a particular item of clothing.



Figure 12.23.  
Button ring, copper alloy.  
Burial 171, Catalog # 931-B.003.  
Interior diameter approximately 12 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

### *Burial 174*

Burial 174, another Late Group interment, held a man between seventeen and eighteen years of age. Two highly degraded pewter buttons (Catalog #s 940-B.001 and 940-B.002) were recovered during the cleaning of the skeletal remains at the Cobb Laboratory, Howard University. The buttons were located on the lumbar vertebrae and the right innominate. The exact size and shape of the buttons could not be determined due to the fragmentary nature of the items, and there were no identifying attributes to suggest method of manufacture. Based on their locations, they may have fastened breeches.

### *Burial 181*

Burial 181, a coffin-less burial assigned to the Late Group, held a man between twenty and twenty-three-years old. Six buttons—three made from copper alloy and three made from copper alloy and bone, were recorded *in situ* (Figure 12.24). A seventh button, also a bone-and-copper-alloy composite, was recovered in the laboratory, but the provenience is unknown. In addition, laboratory records indicate that copper-alloy cuff links attributed to this burial were treated by the conservator but subsequently noted as

missing. No cuff links were mentioned in the field notes or depicted on field drawings, and none were found in the laboratory when the Howard University Archaeology Team began its work.

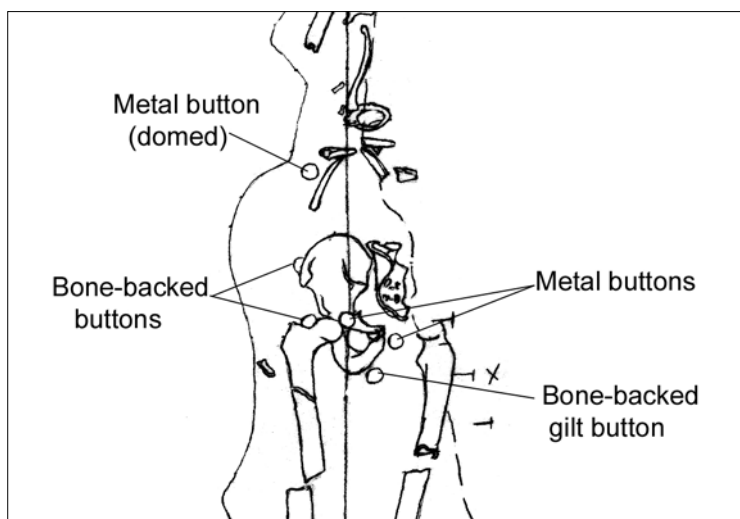


Figure 12.24.  
Detail of the disturbed Burial 181 with buttons in the pelvic area. Scale is 1 inch = 1 foot. *In situ* drawing by M. Schur.

The three metal buttons (Catalog #s 967-B.001, .008 and .009) varied in manufacture and size. Button 967-B.001 (Figure 12.25) was a cast one-piece copper-alloy button that evidently contained zinc and nickel. It had a spun back and a drilled shank. The relatively flat disk, found at the head of the man's right femur, measured approximately 20 mm in diameter. The button appeared to have been decorated but no design elements were identified due to the extensive corrosion.



Figure 12.25.  
Button, copper alloy with zinc and nickel.  
Burial 181, Catalog # 967-B.001.  
Diameter 20 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Button 967-B.008 (Figure 12.26), also from the pelvic area, was a slightly concave, cast disk of copper alloy with zinc and nickel. It measured 29 mm in diameter. The button had an applied loop shank and the back was evidently spun. There were no decorative elements on the button's face.



Figure 12.26.  
Button, copper alloy with zinc and nickel.  
Burial 181, Catalog # 967-B.008.  
Diameter 29 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Button 967-B.009 (Figure 12.27) was the front portion of a copper-alloy domed button with a stamped decoration. The button, which measured approximately 22 mm in diameter, was probably of a cast, two-piece construction, with a braised or flux-joined seam. No remains of the button's back or the shank were recovered in the field. The cast, central decoration was located within a circular recessed area, 13 mm wide, and appeared to have had an overlapping scalloped design, possibly representing the petals

from a stylized Tudor Rose. The back of the object contained a large, off-center mass of metal. The untrimmed mass was evidently a part of the manufacturing process.

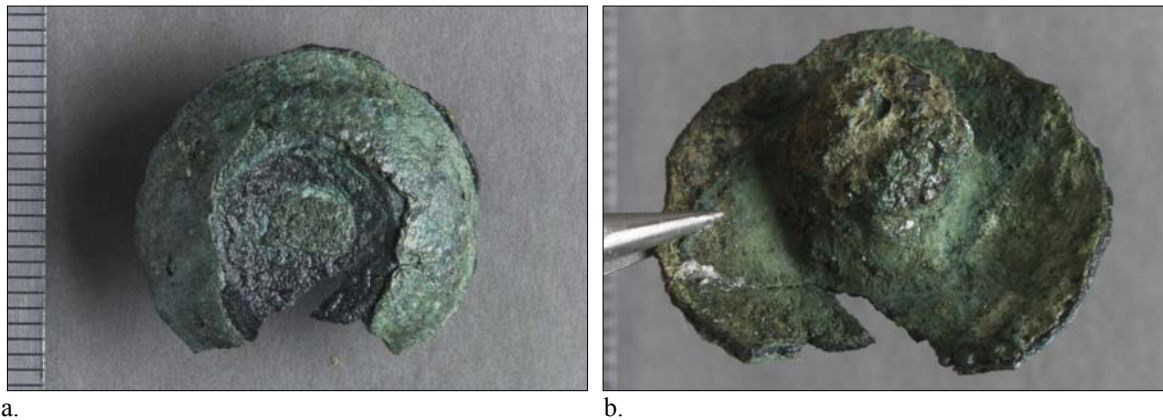


Figure 12.27 (a. face, b. back)  
Button, copper alloy.  
Burial 181, Catalog # 967-B.009.  
Diameter approximately 22 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

The four composite buttons had stamped copper-alloy faces and turned bone backs with looped copper-alloy wire shanks (Catalog #s 967-B.002, .003, .005, and .006; Figures 12.28-.31). All of the items appeared to have been decorated with repoussé or impressed designs. The best-preserved button (967-B.002, Figure 12.28) bore a simple cross-weave pattern finished with gold plating. The design was discernable on fragments of the metal cap and was also impressed on small fragments of soil that adhered to the button.

Buttons .002, .003, and .006 measured approximately 25 mm in diameter, though they would have been slightly larger with the thin, sheet metal caps in place. The bone backs for these three examples were identical in type of manufacture. Concentric turning marks and a narrow, offset rim were evident on each side of each button back. There was a slight concavity to the button back's inner surface, while the opposing surface was convex. Each had been stained by the decomposition of the copper-alloy caps.

Button 967-B.005 (Figure 12.30) was slightly smaller in size than the other composite buttons. This example measured 16 mm in diameter. Portions of the front cap were in place, as well as a complete copper-alloy loop shank. While the button face appeared to have been decorated, no design elements or any evidence of gilt were preserved.

The composite buttons from Burial 181 yielded some interesting manufacturing details. Unlike the flat bone discs found on other burials, the front side of the bone button back was concave to provide a space for the ends of the wire loop shank. In one example (Catalog # 967-B.006) the ends of the wire loop shank were flattened (Figure 12.31). The shank's ribbon-like shape may have served the purpose of making the end of the shank wider and therefore less likely to pull out. This is in contrast to the "sew-through"



portion or eye of the shank, which was formed of rounded wire. Placement of the ends of the wire shank through the bone back preceded the attachment of the metal cap. These examples do not appear to have had metal back plates.



Figure 12.28.  
Button, copper alloy with bone back.  
Burial 181, Catalog # 967-B.002  
Diameter 25 mm.  
Note remains of the button's cap and impressions of criss-cross pattern to the left of the bone back. Fragments of the impressed and gilded decoration on the cap and impressed onto the soil fragment are present in the upper left portion of the photograph.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Figure 12.29.  
Button, copper alloy with bone back.  
Burial 181, Catalog # 967-B.003  
Diameter 25 mm  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.30.  
Button, bone and copper alloy.  
Burial 181, Catalog # 967-B.005.  
Diameter 16 mm.  
Note the repoussé (raised impression) decoration on the preserved fragment of the cap. Fragment is attached to the end of the shank, which rests against the front, concave side of the bone disc. Photograph by Jon Abbott.



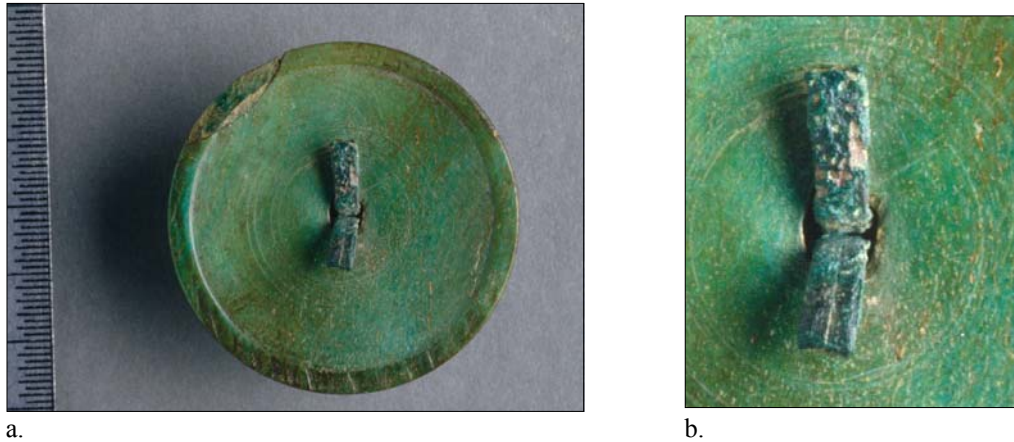


Figure 12.31. (a. back, b. detail of flattened shank)  
Button, bone and copper alloy.  
Burial 181, Catalog # 967-B.006.  
Diameter 25 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Although Burial 181 was disturbed, the button locations in the pelvic area of the skeletal remains are suggestive of trousers. The four matched, composite specimens may have fastened the trouser front. The two flat metal buttons may also have been from this garment. The domed button was found slightly further up the torso area, and may not have fastened the trousers.

### *Burial 191*

Burial 191, a Late Group interment of a man between twenty-five and thirty years old, contained one copper-alloy button. Located at the left ilium, the button measured 17 mm in diameter and was cast in one piece with a loop shank (Figure 12.32). While the back of the flat disc appeared to have been spun, the front face had a few raised features that suggest the button was decorated. In particular, the raised, wavy lines are suggestive of a crown and/or shield, design elements found on contemporaneous coins.



Figure 12.32.  
Button, copper alloy.  
Burial 191, Catalog # 1081-B.001.  
Diameter 17 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

### *Burial 194*

A single copper-alloy button shank was found near the head of the right femur of the thirty-to-forty-year-old man in Burial 194, a Late Group interment. An organic fragment, possibly a leather button cover, was associated with the shank. The shank may have been from a poorly preserved bone or wooden button.

### *Burial 203*

Burial 203, a Late Group interment, held an individual between twelve and eighteen years old. The skeletal remains offered no clear indication of the individual's sex, but the material and positioning of the button fragments recovered with the individual were typical of 18<sup>th</sup> century knee breeches, suggesting that Burial 203 was a young man. Field records depict buttons at distinct locations on the individual: at the knees, the wrists, and the pelvic area.

The button fragments from Burial 203 represented a total of eight separate wood buttons, which had copper-alloy wire shanks and evidently had been faced with leather (Catalog #s 1174-B.001 to 1174-B.008). Field notes refer to fourteen buttons, which were depicted on the *in situ* drawing. The discrepancy in count between the field staff and the laboratory staff may have stemmed from counting displaced fragments as individual buttons (Figure 12.33; note the bottom right specimen fragmented into two layers). In general, the shank portions of the buttons were less well preserved than the crowns.

The eight buttons were identical in terms of manufacture and material. Based on an overall assessment of the recovered fragments, the wooden button disks measured approximately 13 to 15 mm in diameter and appeared to have been manufactured from a fine grained wood species.



Figure 12.33.  
Buttons, wood with leather, copper-alloy shanks.  
Burial 203, Catalog #s 1174-B.001 to .008.  
Diameter 13-15 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

While the button stock was evidently lathe turned and subsequently cut into thin disks, there were no surviving features of this process on the face or back of any of the buttons. Unlike the turned bone discs used for button backs (for example Burial 181), which had a concave front side to allow space for the ends of the wire loop shank, these buttons had a circular, shallow recessed area on the button face. The recessed area provided a space for the ends of the wire loop shank. The loop portion of the shank would have been on the button's flat back.



Figure 12.34. (left)  
Button, wood, front view.  
Burial 203, Catalog # 1174-B.  
Scale in mm.  
Note the recessed area on the front of the face: the hole for the shank had apparently been enlarged by wear.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.35. (right)  
Button, wood, back view.  
Burial 203, Catalog # 1174-B.007.  
Scale in mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

The copper-alloy wire shanks from these buttons were poorly preserved, as noted, and no complete shanks were recovered. Based on the best-preserved example (Figure 12.36), the ends of the wire shank were tightly twisted but not splayed, thus raising the question of how they would have been held in place. It is possible that the ends of the shanks were missing due to corrosion. It is also possible that a piece of wire had been wound around the end of each shank to prevent it from pulling through the central hole. An example of this type of shank was found with Burial 379.



Figure 12.36.  
Detail of copper-alloy button shank fragment.  
Burial 203, Catalog # 1174-B.  
Scale in mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

The eight composite wood and metal buttons were apparently finished with a small piece of material, identified as leather by the conservators. The material covered the recessed face of the wood disc and was probably tightly sewn over the back of the button, as illustrated in Figure 12.8. While the wooden disc buttons did not have the overall green staining associated with copper-alloy covers on bone discs (as in Burial 181), the rust

present on many of the fragments may indicate the wood button was capped with a thin sheet of poorly-preserved iron based metal.

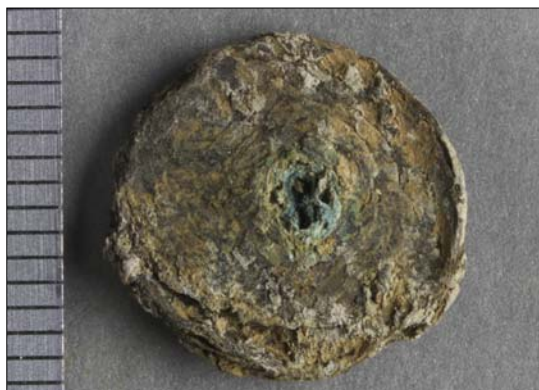


Figure 12.37.  
Button, wood?  
Burial 203, Catalog # 1174-B.  
Diameter 14 mm (scale in mm).  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.  
Note the corroded ends of the copper-alloy shank.

### *Burial 213*

One aglet was recovered from Burial 213, a Middle Group interment of a woman between forty-five and fifty-five years of age. The aglet was found on the left parietal with hair adhering to it (field records identified it as a straight pin). The presence of an aglet on the skull may indicate lacings on a cap, or a shroud drawstring. Alternatively, it may have been displaced from the collar area. Note that the aglet recovered from Burial 22 may also have been located on the skull.



Figure 12.38.  
Aglet, copper alloy (with hair adhering).  
Burial 213, Catalog # 1190-B.001.  
Length 15 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

### *Burial 214*

Burial 214 was assigned to the Late Group. It held a man between forty-five and fifty-five years old. Artifacts recorded *in situ* included a copper-alloy button back (1191-B.002) near the right shoulder, several button shank fragments, a straight pin, and a coin and a knife handle (the latter items are described in Chapter 14).



The button back was from a 21 mm-diameter domed button of two-piece construction, with a braised wire shank. The ends of the wire loop shank appear to have been flattened or crimped prior to the attachment of the button's front face (Figure 12.39). Two degraded copper-alloy shank fragments (1191-B.004), possibly from button .002, were also recovered, but their provenience is unclear. Two iron shank fragments were also recovered during laboratory cleaning of the skeletal remains from the pelvic area (Figure 12.40). A third shank fragment and the remains of a wooden button, Catalog #s 1191-SBH.001 and 1191-SBH.002, respectively (not pictured), were recovered from a flotation soil sample taken from the head area.

The location and fragmentary nature of the clothing-related artifacts from Burial 214 was the result of a later trash pit that affected the central part of the grave shaft, disturbing the pelvic area.

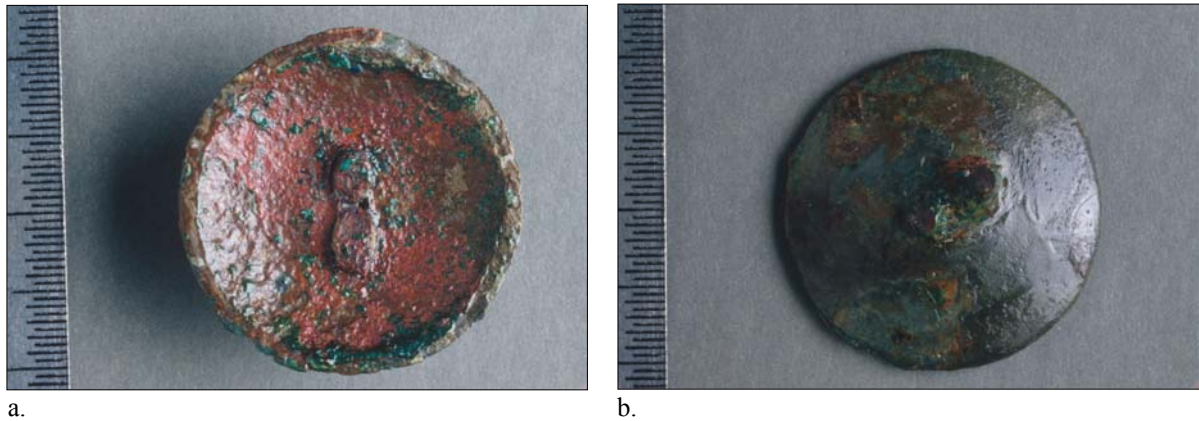


Figure 12.39. (above: a. front view, b. back view)  
Button back, copper alloy.  
Burial 214, Catalog # 1191-B.002  
Diameter 21 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.40.  
Button shank, iron?  
Burial 214, Catalog # 1191-B.004  
Scale in mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

### *Burial 238*

Burial 238, a Late-Middle Group interment, held a forty-to-fifty-year-old man with a set of cast copper-alloy cuff links, one pair found on the right radius (# 1224-B.001) and the other pair beneath the left radius (# 1224-B.002; Figure 12.41). The cuff links were octagonal in shape with flat faces and backs and a small rear lip. The faces measured 15 mm across and each had a cast, flat shank with a drilled eye. The copper-alloy wire loops connecting the cuff links measured approximately 16 mm in length. The apparent raised semi-circular design or letter, which may be due to corrosion, was located adjacent to one end of the shank. A possible maker's mark was noted on the back of one of the faces (# 1224-B.001), but is not visible in the photograph.



Figure 12.41. (a. front, b. back).  
Cuff links, copper alloy.  
Burial 238, Catalog # 1224-B.001 (bottom) and .002. (top)  
Diameter 15 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Figure 12.42.  
Detail of decorative motif  
on cuff link faces from Burial 238.

The four faces had identical decorations (Figure 12.42). Along the outer edge were two narrow octagonal bands. The outermost band was decorated with what may have been an egg-and-dart motif, or possibly a stylized Tudor Rose, while the inner band was undecorated. The center had a circular band with a decoration that repeats the design of the octagonal band. The innermost circle appeared to be stippled.



In addition to the cuff links, a very small single-hole bone button was recovered overlying the fifth and sixth cervical vertebrae. The turned button measured 8 mm and appeared to have had an offset rim (Figure 12.43). The lack of any metallic shanks from the burial or any evidence of metallic staining on the bone button indicates this was a cloth or thread-covered fastener, probably attached with a thread shank.



Figure 12.43.  
Button, bone.  
Burial 238, Catalog # 1224-B.003  
Diameter 8 mm.  
Photograph by John Abbott.

### *Burial 243*

Burial 243 was a Late Group, coffin-less interment of a man between forty and fifty years of age. A single button (Figure 12.44) was recovered from beneath the upper part of the man's skull. The copper-alloy button was cast, with an applied shank, and measured 27 mm in diameter. The loop portion of the shank was missing. While the button was heavily corroded and fragmentary, there was a hint of a raised, annular edge decoration. Based on the location of the item, the relation of this burial to other grave cuts, and the presence in the grave shaft of household and industrial waste material, including glassware, ceramics, tannery and slaughter house debris, the artifact was probably the result of secondary deposition.



Figure 12.44.  
Button, copper alloy.  
Burial 243, Catalog #1230-B.001.  
Diameter 27 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

### *Burial 250*

Burial 250, an Early Group interment, held an adult of undetermined sex and age. A copper-alloy button (Catalog # 1239-B.001) and a small iron mass (Catalog # 1239-B.003) with a large black glass bead (#1239-B.004, described in Chapter 13) were found in the central portion of the coffin interior, possibly near the pelvis. The copper-alloy button (Figure 12.45) measured 20 mm in diameter and had a braised shank, although the





Figure 12.45.  
Button, copper alloy.  
Burial 250, Catalog # 1239-B.002.  
Diameter 20 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

loop portion of the shank was missing. With the exception of a small raised nipple centered on the face, the button was undecorated. Another item, originally identified by conservators as a highly degraded pewter button, was subsequently identified as a tack associated with the iron and glass object. Field recording was minimal for this burial; the precise location of the button, and its association with possible clothing, is impossible to reconstruct. While the button may have fastened a burial garment, the apparent juxtaposition of the objects in this burial suggests a possible alternative function, such as a memento or talisman.

#### *Burial 257*

Burial 257 held a man between thirty and forty years old who was interred with the Late Group. Two whole bone buttons were found in the process of screening the grave fill. Field notes state that one of the buttons was originally located in the sacrum area. A portion of a third bone button was recovered in the laboratory during the cleaning of the left acetabulum (hip joint). The two whole buttons (1246-B.001) and the portion of the third button (1246-B.002) are shown in Figure 12.46.



Figure 12.46.  
Buttons, bone.  
Burial 257, Catalog # 1246-B.002 (fragment on left) and .001 (two whole buttons on right).  
Diameter 12 – 13 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

All three buttons were cut from animal bone and measured between 12 and 13 mm in diameter, with worn or minimal turning marks and no evidence of an offset rim. The lack of offset rims and metal components, such as shanks or caps, or any evidence of metallic staining on the bone, suggest that these buttons were cloth- or thread-covered with thread shanks. It is also possible they were button backs that were never made into buttons, or

that the shanks and covers had been removed. The buttons may have fastened undergarments, but the lack of good provenience information precludes assignment to particular garments or speculation about other ways the items may have been used (such as strung).

### *Burial 259*

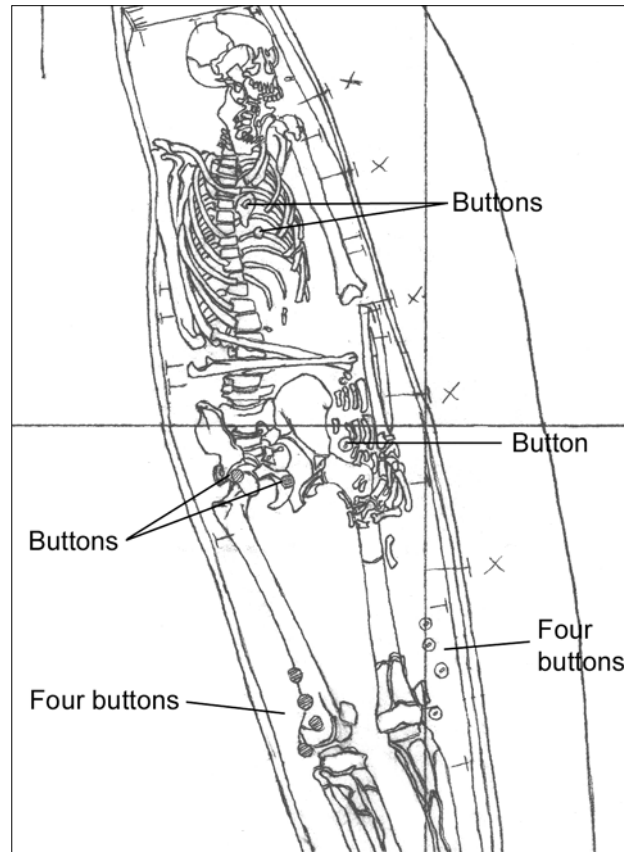
Burial 259 was a Late Group interment of a seventeen to nineteen year old identified as a probable woman. Eighteen buttons or parts of buttons were recorded *in situ* with the skeletal remains (Figure 12.47). There were four buttons with an identical face design aligned along the end of each femur, just above the knees, and three more of the same buttons were found in the pelvic area (Catalog #s 1249-B. 9, .10, .13 [which includes two specimens], .17, and .19-.23).

Two smooth-faced buttons and a button shank were also found on the ribs (Catalog #s 1249-B.11 and 12). Three more button shanks were recorded on the vertebrae and two on the pelvis (Catalog # 1249-B.016).

The button locations at the hips and knees indicate the individual was buried wearing breeches. The two buttons on the ribs may have been from a shirt.

Figure 12.47.  
*In situ* drawing of Burial 259 showing button  
locations. Drawing by M. Schur. Scale: 1  
inch = 1 foot.

Ten of the copper alloy breeches buttons are shown in Figure 12.48. The ones that had been lying face-down on the coffin floor (all on the left side of the body -- Figure 12.47) had wood adhering to their faces. The buttons measured 18mm in diameter and were of cast copper alloy, with a parallel, ridged decoration with milled impressions. The buttons were subsequently spun and finished with tin plate (Figure 12.49). The copper alloy wire shanks were cast in a high cone shaped boss (Figure 12.50).



Portions of two of the buttons on the ribs, identified as metal in the field, were recovered and subsequently were identified by project conservators as leather with woolen fibers

adhering. They were apparently made of wood, possibly with leather covers (Figure 12.51). The five copper-alloy shanks recorded separately in the field represent five additional buttons, which also may have been made of wood that did not survive. Based on the shank morphology, the ends would have extended through the button and were crimped or tied off with a wire to create a flange, so as not to pull through the button face (Figure 12.52; also see Burials 203 and 379 for comparative examples).



Figure 12.48.  
Burial 259.  
Buttons, copper alloy with parallel ridged and milled decoration. Top: Catalog #s 1249-B.9, .10, .13; Middle: Catalog #s .17, .19, and .20; Bottom: Catalog #s .21, .22 and .23. One additional specimen (Catalog # .5) not pictured. Diameter 18 mm. Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.49.  
Button, copper alloy, tin plated.  
Burial 259, Catalog # 1249-B.013.  
Diameter 18 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.50.  
Button, copper alloy.  
Burial 259, Catalog # 1249-B.01.  
Photograph showing boss and wire loop shank.  
Total boss/shank length is 8 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.51.  
Burial 259, Catalog #s 1249-  
B.011 and .012.  
Diameter 16 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.52.  
Button shanks, copper alloy.  
Burial 259, Catalog # 1249-  
B.016  
Length 10 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Woven textile fragments and leather adhered to several buttons, and to the coffin wood where buttons had lain against the bottom board (Figures 12.53 and 12.54). Several of the textile fragments were not identified, but those associated with the breeches buttons were of wool. There were also fragments of linen, labeled as “from buttons” (Catalog # 1249-B.3), but conservators did not record which buttons they were associated with.



Figure 12.53.  
Textile from Burial 259, retrieved from coffin  
wood sample. Catalog # 1249-CWB.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



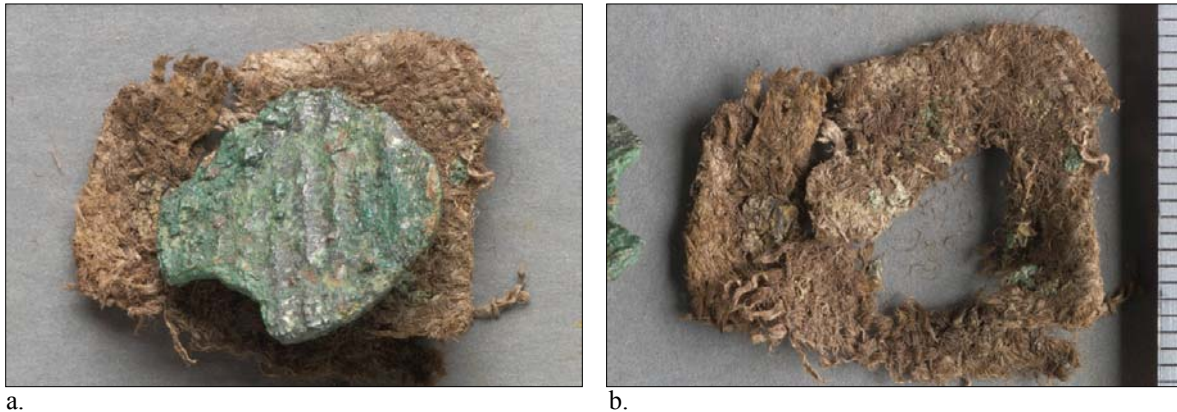


Figure 12.54.

Button and textile, copper alloy and wool.

Burial 259, Catalog # 1249.017. The button was removed from associated cloth to show the buttonhole, which did not appear to have been top stitched (compare to the example from Burial 415). The ruler at right is measured in millimeters. Photograph by Jon Abbott.

### *Burial 271*

Burial 271 was assigned to the Middle Group. It held a man between forty-five and fifty-seven years old who was interred in a coffin with a hexagonal shape. Two copper-alloy domed buttons, each with an outside diameter of 14 mm, were recovered from the screen during excavation. The first button was of one-piece, solid cast construction with a high shank (Catalog # 1267-UNK.001). The second button consisted of small fragments of the dome, which appeared to have been decorated, and a portion of the shank (Catalog # 1267-UNK.002). Because the items were found in the screen, it is impossible to state whether or in what way they were directly associated with the man's remains.

### *Burial 276*

Burial 276 was a Late Group, coffin-less interment of a woman between twenty and twenty-four years of age. While no artifacts were directly associated with the individual, the grave shaft contained a relatively heavy secondary deposit of industrial waste from nearby tanneries/slaughter houses and ceramic manufacturers. Also in the grave shaft were faunal remains, personal items, and domestic ceramics and glassware from the second and early part of the third quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The field notes referred to a possible coin recovered from slightly above the body, near the woman's right rib cage. Upon closer inspection, however, this item was identified as a button (Catalog # 1273-UNC.001). It was of cast copper-alloy and measured 20 mm in diameter, with a curved face and an applied loop shank. The conservators treated seven fragments from the button's face, some of which were gilded. The button did not appear to have functioned

as a clothes fastener or to have been deliberately placed with the woman, but was present in the grave's back fill due to re-deposition.

### *Burial 278*

This Late Group, coffin-less interment held a man between forty-five and fifty-five years old. The association of this burial with a cast, copper-alloy button was problematic. The button was cataloged in the laboratory, but its provenience was not recorded in the field. While there were no artifacts directly associated with this individual, the grave shaft contained a secondary deposit of material including faunal remains, personal items, and domestic ceramics from the second and early part of the third quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The button (Catalog # 1275-UNC.001) was a cast, copper-alloy disk that measured 16 mm in diameter. It had a slightly curved face and an applied loop shank. The majority of the shank was missing. The conservator's notes stated that the back of the button exhibited gold plating and was associated with fabric. No cloth fragments were in the collection handled by the Howard University Archaeology Team.

### *Burial 313*

Three buttons manufactured from animal bone and another possible one represented by a small copper-alloy ring, were recovered about the body and within the coffin of Burial 313, a Late Group interment of a man between forty-five and fifty-five-years old. The three bone buttons, each with a single, central drilled hole, were found lying on the coffin bottom at the top of the man's head. Two measured 22 mm in diameter (Catalog # 1516-B.001), while a third (Catalog # 1516-B.002) measured 13 mm in diameter. The smaller example was identical in manufacture to the two larger buttons. Turning or cut marks were visible on both sides of each button. One of the larger specimens had a narrow offset rim (Figure 12.55), but the rim was not as well manufactured as the examples of this type found with Burial 181.



Figure 12.55.  
Button, bone, with offset rim.  
Burial 313, Catalog # 1516.001 (1 of 2)  
Diameter 22 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



The absence of metal shanks or any evidence of staining on these bone buttons indicated they were covered with cloth or thread, and probably attached with a thread shank. It is also possible these buttons were originally button backs that were modified or reused.



Figure 12.56.  
Button, bone  
Burial 313, Catalog # 1516.002.  
Diameter 13 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

The copper-alloy items (not photographed) identified as fragments of a possible button ring were initially cataloged as three curved straight pin fragments. They were found during laboratory cleaning of skeletal remains, in soil among the left ribs.

The location of the bone buttons near the top of the cranium suggests they did not function as clothing fasteners. There is no way to know whether the possible button ring represented a clothing fastener.

### *Burial 325*

A single copper-alloy button was found on the left upper sacrum of Burial 325, a Late Group interment of a man between twenty-five and thirty-five years old. The button's copper-alloy loop shank was found in two pieces on the lower right sacrum. Both the button disk and the two shank fragments were designated Catalog # 1577-B.001. The cast button measured 22 mm in diameter. It is possible the face was decorated with a bust or human figure in portrait (Figure 12.57). The face was gilded, while the back was spun flat, with a braided loop shank. Field records indicate that unidentified organic material was associated with the



objects, but none of the material was recovered.

Figure 12.57.  
Button and shank fragments, copper alloy.  
Burial 325, Catalog # 1577-B.001.  
Diameter 22 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

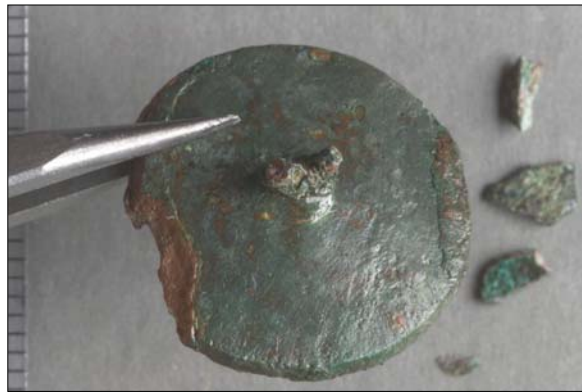
### *Burial 326*

Four buttons (Catalog #s 1584-B.001, .002, .003, and .006) were recorded in association with Burial 326, a Middle Group interment of a man between forty-five and fifty-five years old. (In addition to the buttons, three lead buckshot (size: 3mm) were recovered in association with the man's remains.) All of the buttons were made of copper alloy with a cast, hollow domed construction. Two measured 19 mm in diameter (Catalog #s 1584-B.001 and .002, Figures 12.58 and 12.59), the other two 23 mm (Catalog #s 1584-B.003 and .006). They were all found in the pelvic area and between the tops of the femurs, near the hands. The larger pair was poorly preserved, but appeared to have been ovoid in shape. The button locations suggest either trousers or sleeve links.

On the best-preserved item, one of the two 19 mm buttons, the loop shank was of drawn wire manufacture and was braised on the button's back (Figure 12.59).



a.



b.

Figure 12.58. (a. face, b. back).  
Button, copper alloy, cast hollow-dome.  
Burial 326, Catalog # 1584-B.001.  
Diameter 19 mm. Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.59. (left).  
Button, copper alloy, hollow-dome (back  
view).  
Burial 326, Catalog # 1584-B.002  
Diameter 19 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Items 1584-B.003 and .006 consisted of three fragments from two apparently oval, cast copper alloy buttons (Figure 12.60). The items were manufactured in at least two parts and were domed. No decoration was apparent on any of the pieces. It was not possible to determine the manner in which the shanks had been attached. The pieces from Catalog # .006 had undergone mending by conservators in the lab, but were separated at the time of the final inventory.



Figure 12.60.  
Button face, cast copper alloy.  
Burial 326, Catalog # 1584-B.006.  
Mended diameter 23 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Field records state that a small fragment of cloth as well as a bit of possible hair had adhered to one of buttons. A small fragment of unidentifiable organic material was cataloged (Catalog # 1584-B.09; not photographed), but was not identifiable. Finally, an intrusive, steel ball bearing (1 mm diameter) was recovered.

### *Burial 333*

Six bone button discs were found in association with Burial 333, a Late-Middle Group interment of a man between forty-five and fifty-five-years old. The discs were positioned on and around the pelvic region. Three had outside diameters of 11 mm, two of 13 mm and one of 20 mm (Figure 12.61). (The original catalog listed four at 13 mm and one at 11 mm.) The center holes measured 2 to 3 mm in diameter.

Figure 12.61.  
Buttons, bone.  
Burial 333, Catalog # 1613-  
B.001 (top left), .002 (top  
right), and .003.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.





All of the buttons had been cut from animal bone and had a center drilled hole and worn or minimal evidence of turning marks on one or both sides. A possible narrow offset rim was present on one of the smaller buttons (Figure 12.62). The edge, however, did not follow along the entire circumference of the button and it was likely a fault that occurred in the cutting of the button blank. The absence of offset rims and metal components such as shanks or caps, or any evidence of metallic staining, indicated the buttons had originally been covered with cloth or thread, and probably had thread shanks.



Figure 12.62.  
Button, bone.  
Burial 333, Catalog # 1616-B.001.  
Diameter 11 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

### *Burial 341*

Burial 341, a Middle Group interment, held a man of undetermined age. A pair of cast copper-alloy cuff links was found on the distal left radius (Catalog # 1652-B.001). The cuff links had an octagonal shaped design, but the flat, possibly untrimmed crowns appeared circular when viewed from the back (Figure 12.63). Unlike the octagonal cuff links from Burial 238, these lacked a rear lip, and they were slightly larger in size. The crowns measured 18 mm across and had cast, flat shanks with hand-drilled eyes. The copper-alloy wire loops connecting the cuff links measured approximately 18 mm in length.



a.



b.

Figure 12.63. (a. front, b. back)  
Cuff links, copper alloy.  
Burial 341, Catalog # 1652-B.001.  
Diameter 18 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

The faces had identical decorations. Along the outer edge was a narrow octagonal band decorated with an egg-and-dart motif or possibly a stylized Tudor Rose. The central portion of each crown consisted of a circular band with a decoration that repeated the design of the octagonal band. Within this circular band was a circular area, apparently stippled.

#### *Burial 342*

Burial 342, a Late Group burial, held the remains of a woman twenty-five to thirty-five years old. A copper-alloy aglet (in two pieces) was identified in the laboratory, but its location within the burial is not known. Two straight pins were recorded *in situ* during excavation, one on the cranium and one on the left lower arm, and two pins were accounted for in the lab. It is possible, however, that one of the pins identified in the field was actually the aglet. No decoration was visible on either of the fragments. However, as is evident from the photograph in Figure 12.64, the object was constructed of rolled sheet metal and the ends of the tube were slightly wider than the mid-section.



Figure 12.64.  
Aglet, copper alloy.  
Burial 342, Catalog # 1660-B.0012.  
Scale in .5 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

#### *Burial 353*

Burial 353, a Middle Group interment, held the remains of a man between twenty-four and thirty-four years old. Fragments of a turned bone button were recorded *in situ*, next to the left sciatic notch. Due to wear and/or corrosion, the exact diameter of the button (Catalog # 1723-B.003) could not be determined. The button had a single, centrally located drilled hole. The lack of any metal shanks in the burial or evidence of metallic staining on the button indicates it was a cloth or thread covered fastener, probably attached with a thread shank.

#### *Burial 361*

Burial 361 was an Early Group interment of man between thirty-three and fifty-seven years old. A pewter button was recovered with this burial, from just above the right scapula/humerus. It was given a number in the field (361.1) and was cataloged when first accessioned in the laboratory, but subsequently was noted as missing. The item was never located or examined by the Howard University Archaeology Team.

### *Burial 366*

Burial 366 was a Middle Group interment of an adult between thirty-four and sixty-two years of age whose sex could not be determined. The deceased had been buried with the hands over the upper thighs. A single one-piece button was recorded *in situ* on the right wrist (Catalog # 1830-B.001). It was 20 mm in diameter, of copper alloy, with an applied alpha loop shank (Figure 12.65). A narrow plain band along approximately 50% of the button's preserved edge may have been decorative, or may have been untrimmed excess from the casting process.

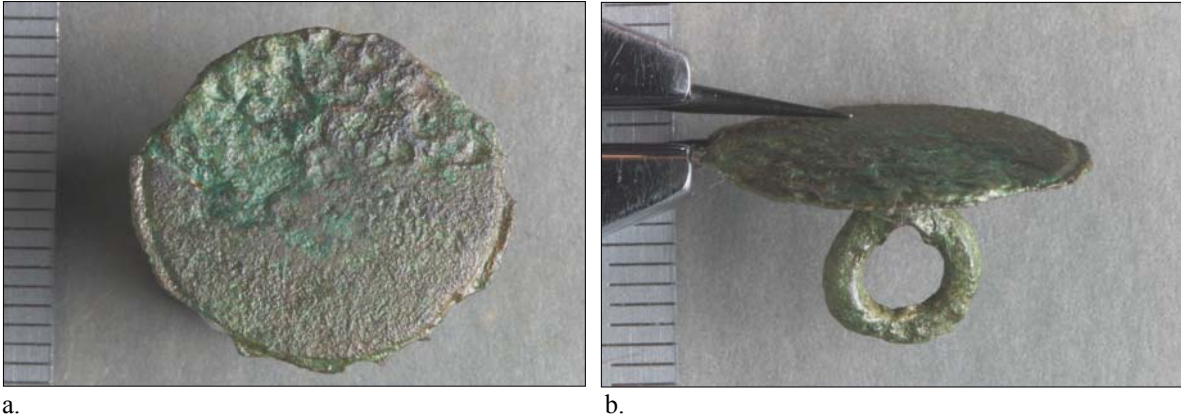


Figure 12.65. (a. face, b. side view with shank)  
Button, copper alloy with applied loop shank.  
Burial 366, Catalog # 1830-B.001.  
Diameter 20 mm.  
Photograph by John Abbott.

### *Burial 368*

Burial 368, which held a child ten and a half to thirteen and a half years old assigned to the Middle Group, was found with a small (11 mm diameter) ring just below the chin, at the throat. This item was tentatively identified as part of a fastening of some kind or a grommet. It was of sheet copper alloy, rolled over.

Figure 12.66.  
Possible grommet, copper alloy (*in situ*).  
Burial 368, Catalog # 1868-B.001.  
Diameter 11 mm.  
Photograph by Dennis Seckler.





### *Burial 371*

Burial 371 is assigned to the Middle Group. It held the remains of a woman between twenty-five and thirty-five years of age who was interred without a coffin. Two button or cuff link faces of copper alloy decorated with enamel (a turquoise background and white-and-pink surface decoration) were found beneath her left humerus. The items, which we categorize as adornment rather than clothing fasteners, are described and illustrated in Chapter 13.

A metal button was also recovered from Burial 371, but its location within the grave was not noted in the field records. The domed, stamped, circular iron disc was 12 mm in diameter and had a 2 mm central hole (Figure 12.67). A small fragment (broken into pieces) of rust-encrusted textile, identified as wool with an undeterminable weave, was found adhering to the button face. The button (possibly used for upholstery) is evidently lacking the pin shank and appears to be of a type manufactured in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Noël Hume 1974: 90-91 ). Based on the lack of provenience and the high degree of disturbance to Burial 371, the button is considered to have been intrusive.



Figure 12.67.  
Button, iron, with associated textile fragment.  
Burial 371, Catalog # 1875-B.002.  
Diameter 12 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

### *Burial 379*

Burial 379, which held a man between thirty and forty years old, was also assigned to the Middle Group. Field notes stated that following the removal of skeletal remains a bone button with a copper-alloy shank was found below the distal end of the left ulna. The item (Catalog # 1906-B.001) was subsequently identified in the laboratory as a leather button, possibly a backing (not photographed). Based on comparable items from Burial 259, the preserved remains may have been the leather covering, or the outer portion of a wood button with a copper-alloy loop shank. The shank (Catalog # 1906-B.002) was well preserved (Figure 12.68). It was made of copper alloy wire, which was then shaped by hand. The inside surface of the loop had been flattened, as had the joined ends. The ends of the 10-mm long shank, which would have extended through the button disc, are slightly wider than the shaft and may have been hand crimped or possibly wound with wire to create a flange that fastened the shank.



Figure 12.68.  
Loop shank, copper alloy.  
Burial 379, Catalog # 1906-B.002.  
Length 10 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

A second button (Catalog # 1906-B.003), of entirely different manufacture, was found during laboratory cleaning of the right innominate. It was an undecorated two-piece copper-alloy domed button with a soldered loop shank extending through the back of the button. The front face of the button measured 17 mm in diameter (Figure 12.69). Most of the back portion of the button was not preserved, but conservators treated the loop shank. The ends of the wire shank, attached before the front and back button sections were joined, were splayed outward.



Figure 12.69.  
Dome button, copper alloy.  
Burial 379, Catalog # 1906-B.003.  
Diameter 17 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

### *Burial 385*

Burial 385, a Middle Group interment of a forty-to-sixty-year-old woman, had two tiny bone buttons. One came from the coffin floor between the right first rib and third thoracic vertebra and the other came from loose sand examined after removal of the right ribs. The buttons (both Catalog # 1964-B.001) were of turned bone and measured approximately 8 mm in diameter. Each of the buttons had a single drilled hole with very little evidence of turning on either side (Figure 12.70). The lack of offset rims and metallic components, such as shanks or caps, or any evidence of metallic staining, indicates they were probably cloth or thread covered fasteners, attached with a thread shank. Such buttons are typical of undergarments. As noted for previously described

burials, it is also possible these buttons were originally button backs that were modified or reused, either by the removal of the metal cap or by reusing a button that lost its shank.



Figure 12.70.  
Buttons, bone.  
Burial 385, Catalog # 1964-B.001.  
Diameter 8 mm (whole specimen).  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

### *Burial 387*

Burial 387 was an Early Group burial of a man between thirty-four and forty-four years of age. A fragment of a cast copper-alloy cufflink or button was recorded in the laboratory, from an unknown provenience within this grave. It was not photographed and was not recovered after the collapse of the World Trade Center. The item cannot be associated definitively with the remains in Burial 387, due to the lack of field provenience and possible mixing from Burial 366. Excessive corrosion made it impossible to obtain the item's overall dimensions or observe manufacturing details.

### *Burial 392*

Eleven buttons, some in fragments, were recorded *in situ* with Burial 392, a Late-Middle Group interment of a man between forty-two and fifty-two years of age who was buried with his head to the east in a rectangular coffin (Figure 12.71). Four well-preserved bone button backs, with associated cloth, were found adjacent to the outside of the right knee (all Catalog #s 2039-B.002; Figure 12.72), and three that were poorly preserved were found on or under the left knee (Catalog #s 2039-B.005, .006, and .008; Figures 12.73 and 12.74). Another three were located adjacent to the right hand, Catalog # 2039-B.010 (Figures 12.75 and 12.76), and 2038-B.011, and one more one was found near the left hand (Catalog # 2039-B.009, Figure 12.77). The button backs from the right hand were 2.1 to 2.2 cm in diameter, while the others examples measured 1.5 to 1.6 cm. One octagonal copper-alloy cufflink face (Catalog # 2039-B.004) was recovered from the right clavicle, and a highly degraded portion of a second face was found in the laboratory when the cervical vertebrae were cleaned (not shown).

The locations of the bone button backs suggest the deceased was laid to rest in pants or breeches, and the possible links at the shoulder may have fastened a shirt at the neck.

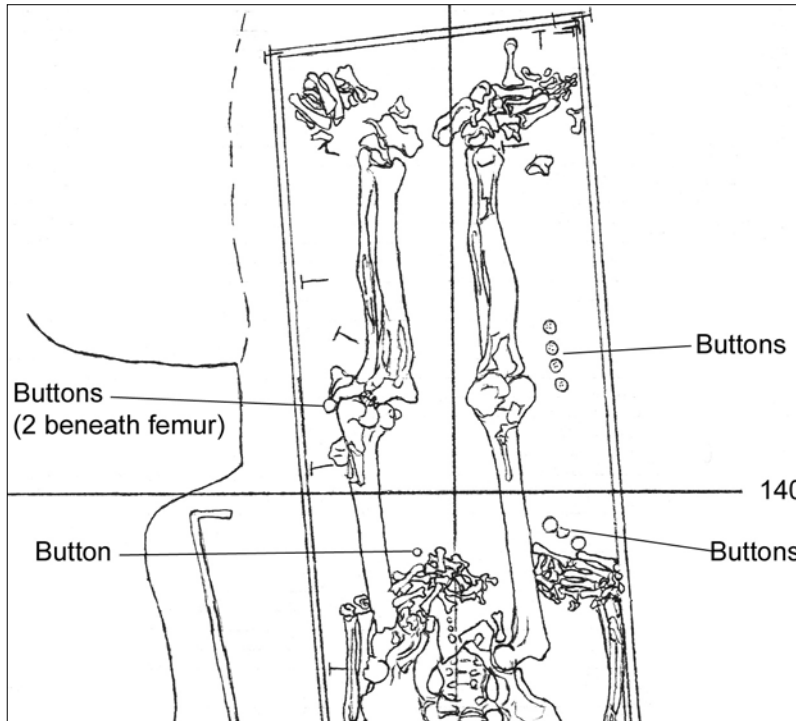


Figure 12.71  
Detail of Burial 392 with  
buttons at knees and hips.  
North is to the right, as is  
the convention throughout  
this report. This burial  
was oriented atypically,  
with the head to the east.  
Scale is 1 inch = 1 foot.  
*In situ* drawing by M.  
Schur.

The bone discs were cut and turned and each had four drilled sew-through holes. A slight central indentation on each was probably the result of the manufacturing process. There was a slight variation in the location of the drilled holes. In the best-preserved examples, the backs had a slight convex dome with a narrow offset rim; the front faces were concave to allow space for threading. The presence of a slight greenish tinge on some of the examples (Figure 12.72), possibly metallic staining, suggests that they may once have had metal caps. No metal components, such as caps, were preserved. Nor were any fragmentary remains noted in the field records.



Figure 12.72.  
Buttons, bone.  
Burial 392, Catalog # 2039-  
B.002.  
Diameter 16 mm  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Selected for replication.





Figure 12.73. (left).  
Button, bone.  
Burial 392, Catalog # 2039-B.008.  
Diameter 21 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Figure 12.74. (right).  
Button, bone.  
Burial 392, Catalog # 2039-B.005.  
Diameter 21 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.75 (left)  
Button, bone.  
Burial 392, Catalog # 2039-B.010 (one of two).  
Diameter 21 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.76. (left).  
Button, bone (mended).  
Burial 392, Catalog # 2039-B.010 (one of two).  
Diameter 21 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.77.  
Button, bone.  
Burial 392, Catalog # 2039-B.009.  
Diameter 16 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Fragments of fine wool were recovered in association with the bone button backs. One from a button at the right knee included a well-preserved buttonhole (Figure 12.78). The button hole, which measures approximately 1 mm wider than the buttons, does not appear to have been edged or finished with thread (for an example of a finished button hole see Burial 415). The project conservators recognized that the fiber had an s-twist.



Figure 12.78.  
Button hole, wool.  
Burial 392, Catalog # 2039-B.001.  
Width 33 mm; button hole is 17 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

The cast copper-alloy cufflink face (Figure 12.79) found at the right shoulder appears to have had loop shank that was cast in place. The face measured 16 mm in diameter and the cufflink's face appears to have had an impressed, centrally placed decoration. A narrow, undecorated band was evident along the edge of the preserved portion of the cufflink. Most of the shank was missing, as was the link. The cufflink may have been used as the top button on a shirt.

Figure 12.79.  
Cuff link, copper alloy.  
Burial 392, Catalog # 2039-B.004.  
Diameter 16 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.





### *Burial 398*

Burial 398 consisted of re-deposited human remains from an adult between twenty-five and thirty-five years of age. Among other items, including nails, nail fragments, straight pin fragments and a ring, was a portion of a button or cufflink. Another button, found to the north of the main concentration of bone, was noted and mapped, but was cataloged with Burial 403.

The copper-alloy cuff link (Catalog # 2061-UNK.003) had an octagonal-shaped face with a cast design consisting of a series of circular impressions, possibly stars, within narrow octagonal bands around a circular central decoration. Additional fragments included portions of a copper-alloy wire link and possibly the remains of a loop shank (Figure 12.80).



Figure 12.80.  
Button or cuff link, copper alloy.  
Burial 398, Catalog # 2061-UNK.003.  
12 mm at widest part.  
Photography by Jon Abbott.

### *Burial 403*

The remains in Burial 403, from a man between thirty-nine and sixty-five years old, were fragmentary and damaged as a result of construction activity at the site during the field program. Items recovered with this interment were scattered among the skeletal remains, and it is not clear whether the items were in direct association with the deceased. Two buttons were photographed and drawn *in situ* before being collected in the field, but three buttons were mentioned in the field notes. Later, four buttons were cataloged in the laboratory. It is likely the fourth button was one that was noted in the field records for Burial 398 (see above).

Two of the buttons were of pewter with a high tin and lead content. They were of cast construction, had applied loop shanks, and measured 23 mm in diameter (Catalog # 2067-B.001, Figure 12.81).

A third button (Catalog # 2067-B.002) was plain, of cast copper alloy with a flat face and a loop shank set in a low boss, 22 mm in diameter. The back of the button appears to have been spun (Figure 12.82). The fourth button (Catalog # 2067-B.003) was an undecorated, copper-alloy cast domed type, of two-piece construction, with a brazed

shank and soldered seams; it measured 17 mm diameter (Figure 12.83). This button's back had two small holes and appeared to have been gilded.

In addition to the buttons, fragments of black cloth with a simple weave were recovered, though it is not clear whether these were associated with particular buttons (Catalog # 2067-B.004, Figure 12.84).



Figure 12.81. (a. front, b. side view)  
Button, pewter.  
Burial 403, Catalog #2067-B.001 (one of two).  
Diameter 23 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

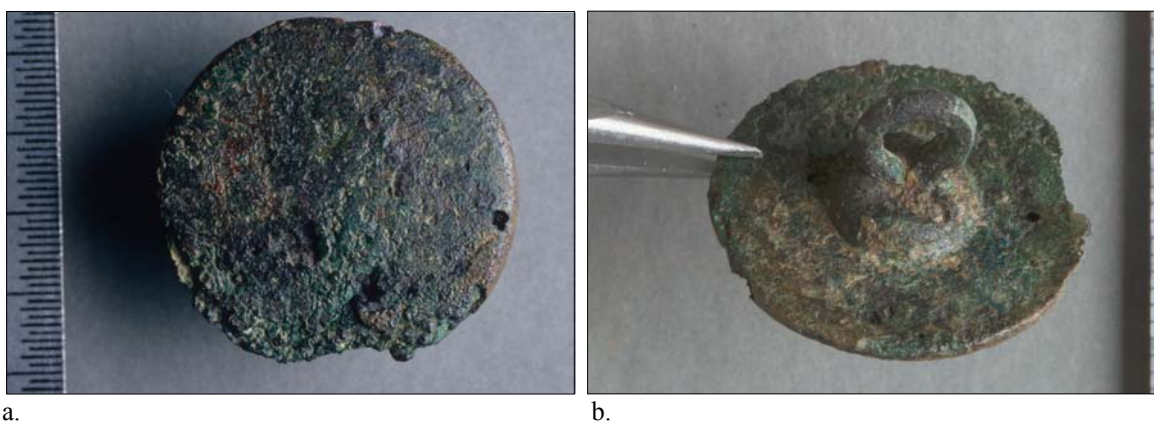
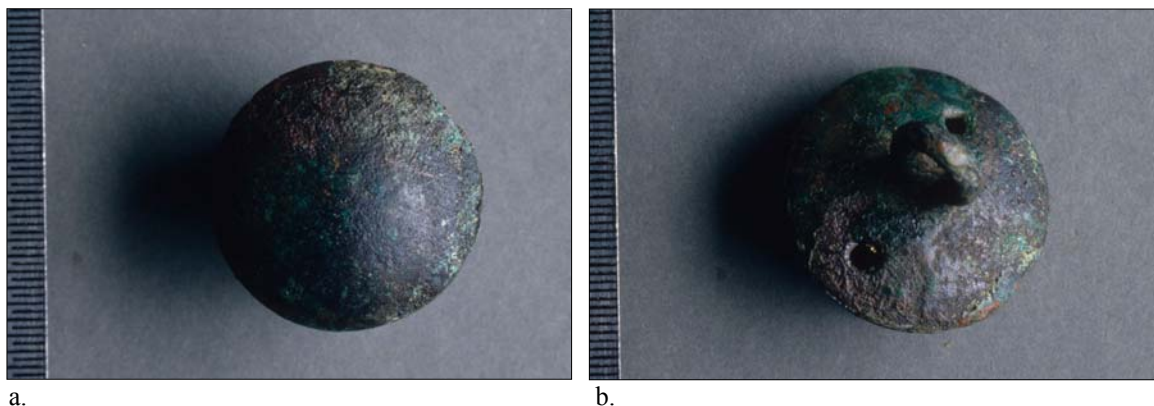


Figure 12.82. (a. front, b. back)  
Button, copper alloy.  
Burial 403, Catalog #2067-B.002.  
Diameter 22 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



a.  
b.  
Figure 12.83. (a. front, b. back)  
Button, copper alloy, cast 2-piece.  
Burial 403, Catalog # 2067-B.003.  
Diameter 17 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.84.  
Textile.  
Burial 403, Catalog #2067-B.004.  
Scale is in .5 mm  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

### *Burial 405*

Burial 405 held the remains of a six-to-ten-year-old child. A single button was recorded *in situ* below the right wrist and was identified in the laboratory as a Britannia large button made of spun white metal with an applied copper-alloy loop shank. The face measured 30 mm in diameter (Figure 12.85). The placement and size of the button

suggest it did not function as a fastener for clothing. It may have been a talisman or item of adornment, perhaps worn on a string, as a bracelet, or placed in the hand of the deceased.



Figure 12.85.  
Britannia button, spun white metal with copper-alloy shank.  
Burial 405, Catalog # 2071-B.001.  
Diameter 30 mm.  
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

### *Burial 415*

The thirty-five-to-fifty-five year-old man in Burial 415, a Middle Group interment, was buried wearing knee breeches, possibly of woolen cloth, and apparently with a fall or drop flap in front. The field drawing of the remains showed fourteen buttons in locations consistent with breeches of this style: four over the left knee, four outside the right knee, two above and on the proximal left femur, and two above and on the proximal right femur (Figure 12.86). Two additional buttons were noted as located beneath the sacrum. There is, however, a discrepancy between the field count of fourteen and the number of buttons (thirteen) that were inventoried in the lab. It is likely the field number was inaccurate due to a button having been broken and counted as two.

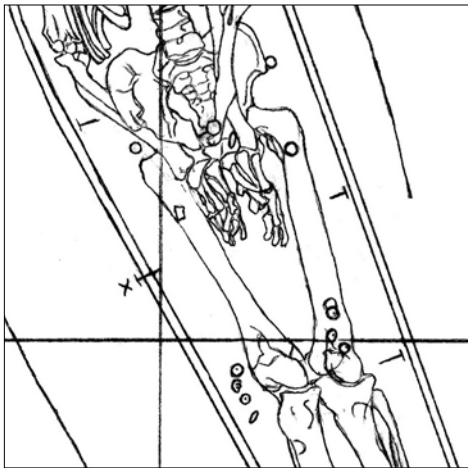


Figure 12.86.  
Detail of Burial 419 drawing, buttons at knees and hips.  
Scale is 1 inch = 1 foot.  
*In situ* drawing by M. Schur.

Though each button was labeled and its exact location (and the elevation of selected items) recorded in the field, this information did not follow individual pieces through the laboratory conservation process, and there is no way now to know with certainty what buttons, which were not of identical manufacture and size, were at each location on the body.

Ten of the buttons (all Catalog # 2097-B.004) were hollow cast and measured 17 mm in diameter (Figure 12.87). Two holes were present in backs (from which heated gasses could escape during manufacture). The face and back of each button were joined, with a hollow center and a separate wire loop shank that was braised to the back. Remnants of the gilding process was observed on some of the buttons, but no other decoration was apparent.

The three remaining buttons were of similar manufacture, but lacked the back holes. Two (both Catalog # 2097-B.006) measured 23.5 mm in diameter (Figures 12.88 and 12.89). One of these was broken, and may account for the fourteenth button mentioned in the field records. The final button inventoried (Catalog # 2097-B.003) measured 18 mm (Figure 12.90). It had a remnant identified by conservators as leather adhering to the back, and a fabric fragment was also processed in association with the button (Figure 12.91).

Wool cloth was recovered with one of the buttons, but due to a laboratory processing error it is not now possible to determine to which specific button it belonged. The cloth was in two layers, one to which the button attached and one containing a sewn finished buttonhole (Figure 12.92 has a detail of the button hole).





Figure 12.87. (a. front, b. back)  
Buttons, copper alloy.  
Burial 415, Catalog # 2097-B.004.  
Diameter 17 mm.  
Photography by Jon Abbott.

a.

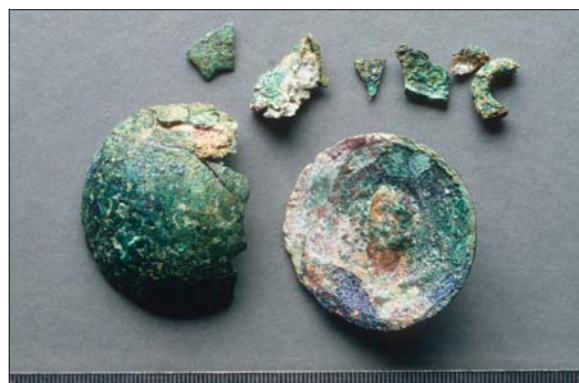


b.



Figure 12.88. (left).  
Button, copper alloy  
Burial 415, Catalog # 2097-B.006.  
Diameter 23.5 mm.  
Photography by Jon Abbott.

Figure 12.89. (right).  
Button, copper alloy.  
Burial 415, Catalog # 2097-B.006.  
Diameter 23.5 mm.  
Photography by Jon Abbott.







a.



b.

Figure 12.90. (a. front, b. back)  
Button, copper alloy with leather.  
Burial 415, Catalog # 2097-B-003.  
Diameter 18 mm  
Photography by Jon Abbott.



Figure 12.91  
Textile.  
Burial 415, Catalog # 2097-B.007.  
Scale is in .5 mm.  
Photography by Jon Abbott.



a.



b.

Figure 12.92.  
Textile, wool.  
Burial 415, Catalog # 2097-B.005.  
a. Fabric to which button was sewn, left, fabric with button hole, right. Width of piece on right: 21 mm.  
b. Detail of buttonhole finished with lighter colored thread. Photography by Jon Abbott.

Another fragment of textile was recovered adhering to coffin wood (Figure 12.93). This may also have been from clothing, though the presence of a shroud cannot be ruled out (there were pin fragments found at the cranium).



Figure 12.93.  
Textile, wool.  
Burial 415, Catalog # 2097-B.005.  
Width of fragment: 17 mm.  
Photography by Jon Abbott.

<p><b>Table 12.3.</b> <b>Clothing worn by enslaved persons who escaped from New York City households</b></p>						
First name	Surname	Ad date	Age	Sex	Clothing	Other adornment
The database of escapee advertisements was created by the Office of Public Education and Interpretation for the African Burial Ground, primarily from the compilation in Hodges and Brown (1994).						
Sarah		11/14/1732	24 about	f	callico suit, striped satteen silk waistcoat, 2 homespun waistcoats, petticoat	
Andrew	Saxon	10/1/1733	man	m	linen osnaburg breeches, old coat, shirts w/cross on left breast	
Johnsey		8/26/1734	25	m	homespun jacket, pair of trowsers, speckled shirt	
Jenney		12/19/1737	14-15	f	birds-eyed waistcoat, darkish pettycoat, callico waistcoat w/lg. Red flower and broad stripe	
Jupiter		1/14/1740	25 about	m	cargey coat and jacket, pair yellow leather britches, good shoes and stockings	
Galloway		10/27/1740	21	m	dark grey homespun jacket, lined; linen breeches; new shoes	
Andrew		6/22/1747	man	m	blue cloth waistcoat, green breeches	
Wan		6/6/1748	25 about	m	white pea jacket lined w/blue, osnaburg shirt, sailor's trousers, a pretty old hat and shoes	
York		5/29/1749	17 about	m	blue and white streaked woolen jacket, coarse osnaburg shirt, old hat, coarse osnaburg breeches	
Bolton		9/4/1749	30 about	m	very ordinary	
Simon		11/21/1748	man	m	blue cloth great coat	
Sam		10/16/1749	27 about	m	homespun coat, short trousers	
Phoebe		8/13/1750	45 about	f	uncertain	
Hector		10/8/1750	man	m	light colored Kersey pea jacket lined w/red, osnaburg shirt, trousers, shoes, stockings	
Crook		6/8/1752	22 about	m	brown homespun jacket, homespun shirt, blue flowered handkerchief on head, no hat, barefoot	
Lewis	Francois	11/5/1753	man	m	white linen shirt, brown yarn stockings, lt. Brown cloth breeches w/silk kneebands, yellow cloth jacket w/gilt buttons	large sq. brass shoe buckles, gilt jacket buttons
Jeremy		3/3/1755	about 21	m	2 blue coats, turn'd up with red, silver laced hat, sundry other clothes	
Anthony		3/3/1755	about 18	m	darkish bearskin coat, Lt. Cloth jacket, breeches, blue jacket, red breeches, castor hat, sundry other clothes	brass buttons
Holliday		10/27/1755	25 about	m	homespun Kersey jacket, felt hat, shoes and stockings	

<p><b>Table 12.3.</b> <b>Clothing worn by enslaved persons who escaped from New York City households</b></p>						
First name	Surname	Ad date	Age	Sex	Clothing	Other adornment
Venture		1/12/1756	boy	m	blue watch-coat, pair of buckskin breeches, striped waistcoat w/metal buttons, very dirty old homespun shirt, mixed hose, shoes w/ large buckles	
Pompey		5/31/1756	14 about	m	blue sailors jacket, striped homespun jacket underneath, old brown cloth breeches, old hat and cap	
Titus		7/26/1756	29-30	m	olive jacket, black breeches, white stockings, half-worn pumps	
Duke		8/30/1756	man	m	speckled shirt and trousers	
Reick		5/9/1757	man	m	leather breeches, striped woolen trousers and shirt, yellowish vest, old shoes, no hat	
Charles		5/30/1757	23 about	m	osnaburg shirt and trousers, blue jacket without sleeves, castor hat, blue cloth coat, red vest, everlag breeches, several shirts	
Claus		7/4/1757	35 about	m	light col. Silk camblet coat, lined w/shalloon, flowered stuff waistcoat lined w/same, wash-leather breeches almost white w/washing, light col. Worsted stockings, pr. Homespun blue woolen stockings, 2 pr. Shoes, Garlix shirt, more	big brass shoe buckles, brass knee buckles
Rose		11/21/1757	35-36	f	striped homespun joseph, old red cloth petticoat, white yarn stockings, old shoes	
Hanibal		1/2/1758	young	m	brown short jacket w/hooks and eyes, black and white striped homespun double-breasted jacket, leather breeches, old wig and hat	
Jasper		5/8/1758	man	m	brown forest cloth coat, blue waistcoat, leather breeches, all w/flat pewter buttons, old hat, broken yarn stockings, old shoes	
Fanny		7/3/1758	woman	f	small black silk hat, lg. Cross barred blue and white striped stuff gown, old red quilted petticoat, bundle of other things	
Ohnech		7/24/1758	28	f	homespun stole, petticoat, blue short cloak, white cap	
York		7/24/1758	man	m	old shoes, blue, red worsted plush breeches, old trousers, check shirt, blue jacket, small cropt hat w/yellow worsted ring around	carved shoe buckles

<p align="center"><b>Table 12.3.</b> <b>Clothing worn by enslaved persons who escaped from New York City households</b></p>						
First name	Surname	Ad date	Age	Sex	Clothing	Other adornment
Frank	Francosis	9/13/1758	40 about	m	a short blue sailor's jacket, and trousers, a checked shirt and old hat	
Jack		1/29/1759	man	m	brown Pea-jacket, a blue under one, a pair of buck-skin breeches	
Fanny& child		10/1/1759	(child)8 mon.	f	red and white striped Cotton Gown, a striped blue and white Petticoat , and a cap without any border	
Harry		12/31/1759	man	m	old green jacket and a white one under it, a cap and woolen ribbed stockings	iron collar around his neck (not visible without exam)
Pompey		2/18/1760	man	m	white coat, ozenbrigs shirt, cloth trousers	
Glasgow		3/17/1760	about 18	m	blue great coat, plain white swan-skin jacket, pair of trousers, pair of Lt. Blue stockings joined in the middle, new pair of shoes	
Tom		6/30/1760	14 or 15	m	osnabrigs shirt and trousers, deep blue broad cloth jacket, the fore-parts lined in two colors.	
Suck		2/26/1761	about 20	f	homespun short gown with different colored stripes, a blue and white handkerchief, a quilted petticoat, one side light coloured the other side Black,	
Prince		2/26/1761	man	m	Brown bearskin pea jacket double breasted lapel, lined with light coloured cloth, a short double breasted red waistcoat brass buttons, a pair of cloth	
Lens		6/18/1761	17	f	homespun Josey and pettycoat, no shoes or stockings	
Windsor		7/23/1761	about 23	m	brown frock livery coat with yellow collar, white shirt, waistcoat, black shag breeches, speckled stockings, new shoes, gold lac'd hat; new beaver hat	
Charles	Roberts	4/29/1762	28 or 30	m	2 or 3 coats or suits, dark brown cloth coat (worn)dove colored cloth or fine frize, light blue-gray summercoat of grogam, camblet, ... (other)	Waistcoat with silver cord
		8/19/1762	about 30	m	light colored cloth pair of breeches, jacket with flash sleeves, long striped trowseres, check shirt w/ chitterstrings	wears rings in his ears
Tom		8/26/1762	man	m	Lt. Brown sagathee coat, crimson waistcoat, breeches, Lt gray stockings, white shirt, felt hat, stockings	



<p align="center"><b>Table 12.3.</b> <b>Clothing worn by enslaved persons who escaped from New York City households</b></p>						
First name	Surname	Ad date	Age	Sex	Clothing	Other adornment
Jack		9/9/1762	man	m	blew surtout coat w/yellow buttons, black knit breeches, black stockings, check shirt	
Jack		9/23/1762	13 or 14	m	white shirt, black stocking breeches, white waistcoat, Lt. Brown stuff waistcoat w/dirty silver cord, no sleeves, black stocking waistcoat, black castor hat, no shoes or stockings.	
Pero		9/30/1762	19	m	white jacket, strip'd trowsers, a hat, but no shoes	had bobs in his ears
Salvavus		10/14/1762	about 22	m	Lt. Blue double breasted jacket, lined white flannel, Lt. Colour'd breeches, oznabrig shirt	
Joe		12/23/1762	24	m	brown coat with red lining, red double breasted vest, thicksett breeches, felt hat	
Siro		1/7/1763	man	m	brown coat, green jacket. Leather breeches, blue stockings, shoes but on the top and sew'd up again	
Lucretia		3/5/1763	woman	f	black petticoat, white apron, speckled handkerchief, blue waistcoat, laced cap, blue shot cloak	
		7/28/1763	man	m	oznaburgh jersey, petticoat	beads round her arms and neck
		7/28/1763	man	m	oznaburgh frocks, trowsers	
		7/28/1763	woman	f	oznaburgh frocks, trowsers, brown cloth jacket without sleeves	
Pompey		8/15/1763	20	m	check shirt with white patch, linsey woolsey double breasted jacket- no buttons, red cap, long striped trowsers, no shoes, linen neckcloth	has a hole in each ear
Tom		8/18/1763	30	m	red waistcoat faced with white, gray coat faced with red	
Wall		8/25/1763	40	m	red coat, manchester velvet jacket, thread stockings, new shoes	
Baptist		9/1/1763	about 40	m	good cloaths, green striped jacket, holland skirts,	
Sam		9/29/1763	about 30	m	narrow brimmed hat cock'd on one side, Lt. Brown coat, short shirts, scarlet breeches, black worsted stockings	pewter buckles
Lester		10/27/1763	about 40	m	white flannel jacket and drawers, duck trowsers, home-spun shirt	
Caesar		10/27/1763	about 18	m	white flannel jacket and drawers, duck trowsers, home-spun shirt	
Isaac		10/27/1763	about 17	m	white flannel jacket and drawers, leather breeches and home-spun shirt	

<p><b>Table 12.3.</b> <b>Clothing worn by enslaved persons who escaped from New York City households</b></p>						
First name	Surname	Ad date	Age	Sex	Clothing	Other adornment
Mingo		10/27/1763	about 15	m	white flannel jacket and drawers, duck trousers and home-spun shirt	
Hannah		2/9/1764	about 19	f	green jacket, old home-spun petticoat, red and white handkerchief about her neck, men's shoes, old black crape gown, old flowered apron , check one	
Harry		9/20/1764	man	m	Lt. coloured double-breasted jacket, coarse white linen shirt, short wide trousers, half worn shoes	steel buckles and a scotch bonnet
		11/8/1764	man	m	new blue jacket , new stockings and shoes without any buckles	
		11/8/1764	man	m	new blue jacket and breeches, new stockings and shoes without any buckles	
Pegg		12/13/1764	about 40	f	red cloak, white hat, pair of men's shoes, callico gown, [a variety].	
Cate		6/27/1765	woman	f	striped home-spun petticoat, double purple and white callico, short gown, old stuff shoes without stockings	
Sharp		7/4/1765	about 20	m	blur sailor's jacket, checked shirt, oznabrigs trousers, old beaver hat (cock'd), pair of old shoes, no stockings	
Toby		7/11/1765	about 21	m	brown fustian jacket, ozenbrigs shirt and trousers and an old beaver hat	
John		1/16/1766	about 30 years	m	good castor hat, ozenbrigs shirt, black crape caravat, brown bearskin great coat, cloth upper jacket lined with red striped linsey, green napt, possesses one white shirt, stockings,	figure brass buttons, square steel buckles
Sal		4/24/1766	about 28	f	purple calico gown, striped cotton short ditto, purple and white calico Joseph, old plain gown, blue quilted petticoat, green pettistone ditto, etc.....	
Bill		5/1/1766	about 20 or 22	m	old red cloth jacket, home-spun trowsres	iron collar
Charles		6/26/1766	man	m	brown jacket, blue short waist coat underneath, pair of trousers, sailor's round hat	
John	Baptist	10/8/1768	about 45 to 50	m		has holes in each ear for earrings
Norway		8/1/1768	about 33	m	a blue coat with silver thread buttons, reddish mix'd color cloth waistcoat, white plush breeches	

<p align="center"><b>Table 12.3.</b> <b>Clothing worn by enslaved persons who escaped from New York City households</b></p>						
First name	Surname	Ad date	Age	Sex	Clothing	Other adornment
Spier		12/10/1770	about 15	m	blue cloth coat, short white ditto under it, old knit yellow breeches, shoes stockings, hat sewn up all around	
Syme		3/18/1771	about 24	m	old thickset coat, old beaver hat, old watch coat, other olds cloaths	
Bristol		9/2/1771	about 15	m	tow-cloth jacket, trowsers, ozenabrigs shirt, barelegged	
Cato		10/19/1772	about 22	m	ozenbrigs shirt, jacket trowsers, new felt hat, shoes stockings	
Philis		1/4/1773	woman	f	Lt. coloured calimaco gown, check apron, black silk cloak, black peelong bonnet	
Jack		1/11/1773	about 33	m	brown double-breasted short Forrest Cloth Jacket, plain brass buttons, lined with red baize, red baize under jacket, leather breeches, blue yarn.....	
Dick		1/11/1773	19	m	beaver hat (smartly cocked) new Lt. coloured coat and green cuffs, buckskin breeches, ribbed stockings (mixed colour)	silver buckles
Prince		10/13/1774	20	m	brown thickset suit, band on his hat, his hair tied up behind	silver loop button, large tupee before
John	Rattan	12/8/1774	about 33	m	Lt. coloured cloth coat, blue cloth waistcoat and breeches	
Joseph	Low	11/27/1775	man	m	possesses several suits of good cloaths	
Daniel		2/5/1776	about 9	m	old brown surtout coat, cotton check shirt	
Prince		7/15/1776	about 21	m	blue cloth jacket, white home-spun shirt, trowsers	
James		7/22/1776	man	m	old gray bearskin short coat, check shirt, linen breeches, worsted stockings	
Caster		8/19/1776	about 35	m	white linen trowsers, tow shirt, pair of old shoes,	brass buckles
Tom		9/9/1776	about 50	m	pair of brown tow trowsers, striped woolen shirt, felt hat half worn, new shoes waistcoat four parts-brown/white	buckles
York		10/14/1776	about 19	m	old brown cloth jacket w/ plain yellow metal buttons, red cloth collar , brown cloth waistcoat w/ small yellow metal buttons, check shirt, trowsers	shoes w/ yellow buckles, old round hat w/ gold ed.

<p><b>Table 12.3.</b> <b>Clothing worn by enslaved persons who escaped from New York City households</b></p>						
First name	Surname	Ad date	Age	Sex	Clothing	Other adornment
Will		11/11/1776	19	m	white linen jacket w/ sleeves, blue cloth breeches, white stockings, and a hat half worn; Has knapsack full of clothes; possesses broad cloth coat etc....	
Ned		11/13/1776	about 12	m	blue under jacket, whiteish wilton coat, new blue duffle trowsres, check shirt whiteish stockings	
Fortune	Brookman	12/9/1776	about 20	m	red plush waistcoat, snuff coloured long trowsers	
Caesar		1/6/1777	about 30	m	wears a dirty looking cloth coat with buttons of the same colour, round hat with high crown, wears boots in wet weather; has a variety of clothes	set of silver shoe and knee buckles of open work
Loui		3/3/1777	about 20	m	short blue coat lapelled w/ yellow metal buttons, white waistcoat and breeches, white flannel trowsers, good shoes, stockings, white shirt,	white cap bound with red
Joe		4/28/1777	young fellow	m	green cloth coat, waistcoat leather breeches	
Sam		5/19/1777	about 28	m	property of the heirs of the late Widow Hester Weyman	
Chess		5/26/1777	about 20	m	blue coat breeches, fond of dress	
Pompy		6/2/1777	about 17	m	red jacket, ozenbrigs shirt and trowsers, shoes, stockings, jockey cap	
Frank		6/14/1777	18 or 19	m	brown coat with a cape, old black breeches, may alter his dress: 2 check shirts, pair of trowsers	
Dick		7/28/1777	man	m	dark gray coat, jacket, white and check shirts, sundry strip'd trowsers, red and white striped jacket	
Jerremy		8/4/1777	about 25	m	black breeches & stockings, white cloth coat w/ []d buttons, beaver hat	silver buckles in his []
Fortune		8/18/1777	about 23	m	osnaburgh Trowsers, spotted flannel jacket	
Tom		9/22/1777	about 14	m	striped jacket, trowsers, check shirt, no shoes or stockings, jacket tied with pieces of tape in place of buttons	
Bet		10/20/1777	woman	f	homespun pettycoat, callico short gown	
Peter		11/3/1777	about 13 or 14	m	suit of brown fustian, suit of claret coloured fine cloth 2/3rds worn, round hat, several pair stripped trowsers, etc...	
Alick		1/3/1778	about 15	m	check shirt, reddish coloured jacket, onzaburg trowsers, leather cap	

<p><b>Table 12.3.</b> <b>Clothing worn by enslaved persons who escaped from New York City households</b></p>						
First name	Surname	Ad date	Age	Sex	Clothing	Other adornment
		1/24/1778	about 13	m	red coat ( turned up w/green), green trousers, blue jacket, coarse hat with gold band	stone buckle
Diona		5/16/1778	18	f	blue striped waistcoat, blue petticoat, black hat, short red cloak w/ ermine on the fore part	
Jem		5/16/1778	about 14	m	hat, brown vest and trousers	
Phillis		6/6/1778	about 25	f	black and white striped wooly jacket and petticoat and white bonnet	
Hannah		8/1/1778	about 14	f	ozenbrig petticoat and shift, brown and blue short gown and an old green bonnet	
Belinda		2/12/1780	about 21	f	brown jacket, red petticoat, white handkerchief, high cap	
Robert	Kupperth	3/29/1780	about 19	m	old regimentals	
Tom		4/15/1780	about 15 or 16	m	had on a brown thicksett jacket and osnaburg trousers, old round hat shoes and stockings	
		5/3/1780	14 or 15	f	had on flowered red and green flannel petticoat and blue cloth jacket	
York		5/20/1780	about 12	m	short brown waistcoat, check shirt, woolen trousers nearly white, blue cap	
Toney		6/17/1780	boy	m	brown sailor's jacket, striped Holland trousers, check shirt and a bound hat	
Cain		7/5/1780	about 26	m	brown short coat, w/white metal buttons, brown waistcoat, white breeches, cock'd hat, black silk handkerchief about his head; has sundry other wearing apparel	
Tom		8/5/1780	about 16	m	thicksett jacket, and osnaburgh trousers	
Scip		9/2/1780	about 14	m	check shirt, pair of striped trousers	
Fortune		9/2/1780	about 18	m	small round hat bound w/ silver lace	
Jenny		9/6/1780	about 14	f	black callimanco coat, white linen wrapper and cap; carried all clothes with her	
Rose		9/20/1780	woman	f	green fluff petticoat, a red & white callico short gown, red silk handkerchief, black sattin bonnet	
Will		10/18/1780	about 17	m	blue jacket [] up with red, canvas pair of breeches	silver plated buckle
Bob		11/1/1780	about 12	m	onzaburg frock , red jacket	



<p><b>Table 12.3.</b> <b>Clothing worn by enslaved persons who escaped from New York City households</b></p>						
First name	Surname	Ad date	Age	Sex	Clothing	Other adornment
Tony		12/13/1780	22	m	short blue coat, white metal buttons, striped jacket, long pair of blue trousers	
Sim	Sampson	1/27/1781	about 18	m	white jacket, black hat w/red ribbon, pair of boots, long blue and white trousers	
Pleasant	Queen Ann	3/3/1781	woman	f	red moreen petticoat, brown short gown w/ white lining, pair of brown ribbed stockings	
Prussia		3/21/1781	about 21	f	had a quantity of cloaths with her	
Tom		5/2/1781	boy	m	brown cotton jacket, black velvet Jockey cap, blue breeches, shoes and stockings	
Charles	Macaulay	5/5/1781	about 16 or 17	m	old red jacket, white flannel one under it, pair of white fearnought trousers, a sailor's round hat	
Pameila		6/27/1781	18	f	short purple callicoe gown, pink petticoat	
Duff		5/30/1781	boy	m	red waistcoat, check shirt, osnaburgh trousers, no shoes, nor hat	
Luce		7/21/1781	about 28	f	homespun short gown and petticoat	
Sarah		7/25/1781	about 19	f	white short gown and a cotton petticoat	
York	Revers	7/25/1781	about 21 or 22	m	brown coat with red cuffs and collar, and osnaburgh trousers	
Jack		7/25/1781	about 12	m	blue coat faced with red	
Jane		8/15/1781	about 19	f	two Lt. coloured callico short gowns, black callimanco skirt and old stuff shoes	
		8/25/1781	boy	m	coarse round hat, small striped jacket w/out sleeves, check shirt, pair of Russia [...] trousers open at foot	
Mattis		8/25/1781	about 22	m	three check shirts, oznaburgh trousers and frock, pair of mottled nankeen breeches patched on the Rt. Knee, striped jacket, round hat.	
Jacob		9/1/1781	near 14	m	red jacket, osnaburgh trousers, check shirt, no hat or shoes	
Jack		9/1/1781	14	m	check shirt, trousers	
Bristol		10/3/1781	about 14	m	homespun linen shirt and trousers	
Diana		10/10/1781	about 14	f	short red callico bed gown, osnaburgh petticoat, blue handkerchief (sic)	
James	Herbert	10/10/1781	34	m	brown jacket	
Tom	Whit[en]	10/10/1781	23	m	green jacket	

<p><b>Table 12.3.</b> <b>Clothing worn by enslaved persons who escaped from New York City households</b></p>						
First name	Surname	Ad date	Age	Sex	Clothing	Other adornment
Peg		11/17/1781	18	f	blue cloth jacket w/ long sleeves (in the form of a riding dress) w/ bright yellow buttons	
Tom		12/8/1781	boy	m	long scarlet coat, double lapelled w/ gilt buttons, red jacket, double breasted, white breeches, grey worsted ribbed stockings, strong shoes, cap	white metal buttons
Cudjoe		1/5/1782	boy	m	blue jacket, trowsers	
Rachel		1/9/1782	woman	f	dark callicoe short gown, homespun petticoat without cloak or hat	
Polly		1/9/1782	13	f	off without shoes, stockings, and wore a blue baize frock	
Jane		2/9/1782	about 15	f	pale green callimanco petticoat, red short gown, scarlet cloak with hood	
Lissa		2/13/1782	about 24	f	brown short gown, brown serge petticoat, blue short cloak unbound with a cap to it; possesses 2 callico long gowns, other...	
Charlottee		3/6/1782	19	f	white gown and petticoat	
		3/13/1782	boy	m	black super-fine broad cloth coat, waistcoat, black silk breeches & stockings, beaver hat with crape around it	
Tom		3/23/1782	boy	m	suit of morning	
Joe		4/20/1782	man	m	blue short jacket, straw hat	
James		4/24/1782	16 or 17	m	cap [red, Lt. coloured] short brown coat, white dimity jacket, homespun linen trowsers	
Phillis		5/15/1782	woman	f	brown strouding jacket, black shirt, cheque apron, blue stockings, men's shoes	
Bacchus		6/8/1782	about 12	m	white jacket, striped trowsers, no shoes or hat	
Caesar	Augustus	6/15/1782	man	m	regimental blue coat w/ red collar, red waistcoat, linen trowsers, round hat	
Jack		6/15/1782	about 15	m	blue and white striped linen jacket. Pair of parson's grey board cloth trowsers, white homespun linen shirt, small round hat	
David		7/17/1782	13 or 14	m	scarlet waistcoat and trowsers	
		7/27/1782	about 24	f	shift and under petticoat	
		8/3/1782	13 or 14	f	white short gown, black calimanco skirt, no cap, black bonnet	pair of ear bobs in her ears

<p align="center"><b>Table 12.3.</b> <b>Clothing worn by enslaved persons who escaped from New York City households</b></p>						
First name	Surname	Ad date	Age	Sex	Clothing	Other adornment
Tony		8/17/1782	24	m	short Lt. coloured wilton coat, callico jacket, pair long brown silk trousers, pair new shoes, round black hat	
Adam		8/17/1782	19	m	wore an officers old red coat faced with white, gold basket button, brown jacket and trousers	
John	Jackson	9/25/1782	about 22	m	Lt. coloured Fustian jacket, waistcoat, breeches, cock'd hat, green and red short outside jacket, pair of black silk breeches	
Peter		10/2/1782	boy	m	white linen shirt, white cloth waistcoat without sleeves, striped Holland trousers	
Cato		10/12/1782	boy	m	blue short jacket, linen with green, and long linen trousers	
Jack		10/16/1782	10	m	coarse white shirt, trousers, old light brown cloth jacket, round hat, without shoes or stockings	
Jack		10/16/1782	boy	m	blue waistcoat, striped jacket, canvas trousers, grey stockings, without a hat	
		10/26/1782	about 13	m	check shirt, oznabrig trousers, old red coat w/ black collar and cuffs	
London		10/30/1782	14	m	white wollen waistcoat, breeches, and a shirt	
Billy		1/13/1783	about 20	m	common dress of a sailor, viz, a blue jacket, pair of blue trousers, round hat, check shirt	
Nancy	Blond	2/15/1783	woman	f	green baize wrapper, light coloured petticoat, bundle of other clothes	
Seth		3/15/1783	about 14	f	red baize jacket, petticoat, high heel'd shoes	
EBB		4/9/1783	18	m	brown coat (French fashion), grey cloth coat, black breeches, large brimed bound hat	
Duff		4/28/1783	boy	m	brown jacket, new fustian trousers, new wool hat	
Jack		5/10/1783	about 23	m	check shirt, blue waistcoat, blue coatee w/ red cape, long white trousers, white stockings	
Cesar		6/14/1783	about 26	m	Lt. coloured cloth waistcoat, no sleeves, white metal hole buttons, pair of jean breeches, shoes stockings, half worn white hat	
Poll		6/14/1783	about 13	f	red cloath (sic) petticoat, Lt. Blue short gown, home made	

<p><b>Table 12.3.</b> <b>Clothing worn by enslaved persons who escaped from New York City households</b></p>						
First name	Surname	Ad date	Age	Sex	Clothing	Other adornment
Luce		6/29/1783	about 30	f	green striped fluff gown (washed), dark blue moreen petticoat, gauze cap, pink ribbons, no hat, dark purple callicoe gown	
Jack		7/9/1783	b/w 11 and 12	m	osnaburg shirt, tow trousers	
		8/16/1783	little boy	m	blue coat w/ red cuffs and collar, fustian trousers, with buttons all down the sides	
Lucy		8/13/1783	about 28	f	2 short gowns, 2 petticoats, 1 striped bottom short gown, yellow ground callicoe, black petticoat, one green	
Venus		8/13/1783	5 or 6	f	tow cloth frock	
Madlane		10/3/1783	about 12	f	striped woollen rapper, dark blue petticoat w/ white flowers, bare footed	
Thomas		11/3/1783	man	m	blue sailors jacket, green under waistcoat, whitish woollen or oznabrig trousers	
Kate		10/22/1783	woman	f	callico short gown w/ blue and yellow horses, carriages & soldiers, several caps w/ long ears	
Cuffey		11/5/1783	man	m	brown surtout-coat	
Johannis		11/5/1783	man	m	blue & white striped linen jacket, with shoes and stockings	
Flora		11/12/1783	44 or 45	f	generally wears striped homespun; may be in black	
James		11/12/1783	about 21	m	wears dark brown; may be in black	
Hector		11/19/1783	18	m	round hat, short coatee (Lt. Colour), cloth waistcoat, watch-coat w/velvet cap, coating pair of trousers (grey), white stockings	
Stepney		12/6/1783	20	m	green short coat, blue under waist-one, buck-skin breeches w/ blue surtout-coat	
Prince		12/6/1783	17	m	blue cloth trousers, reddish sailor's jacket, dk brown great coat	
Sarah		12/17/1783	30	f	callicoe short gown, black shirt, black hat trimmed w/ edging; took number of good clothes	
		12/24/1783	13	m	blue short jacket, trousers of the same cloth	